

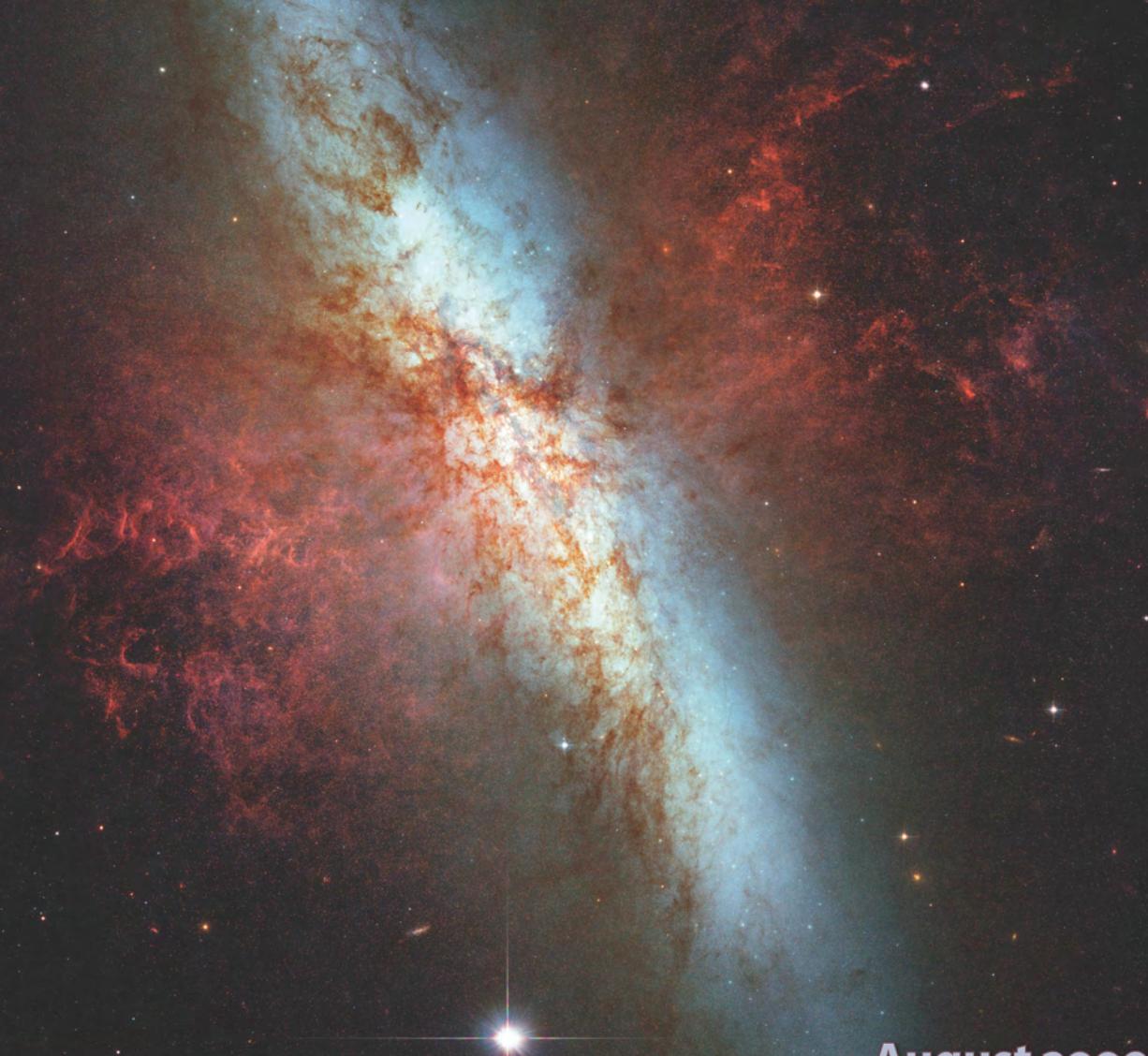
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# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

or AWAKENED INDIA

A monthly journal of the Ramakrishna Order  
started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896



August 2009

***Consciousness; Intelligence  
Yoga of Same-sightedness***

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Vol. 114, No. 8

# THE ROAD TO WISDOM

## SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON *Consciousness and Existence*



According to Vedanta, the three fundamental factors of consciousness are, I exist, I know, and I am blessed. The idea that I have no want, that I am restful, peaceful, that nothing can disturb me, which comes from time to time, is the central fact of our being, the basic principle of our life; and when it becomes limited, and becomes a compound, it manifests itself as existence phenomenal, knowledge phenomenal, and love. Every man exists, and every man must know, and every man is mad for love. He cannot help loving. Through all existence, from the lowest to the highest, all must love. The y, the internal thing-in-itself, which, combining with mind, manufactures existence, knowledge, and love, is called by the Vedantists, Existence absolute, Knowledge absolute, Bliss absolute. That real existence is limitless, unmixed, uncombined, knows no change, is the free soul; when it gets mixed up, muddled up, as it were, with the mind, it becomes what we call individual existence. It is plant life, animal life, human life, just as universal space is cut off in a room, in a jar, and so on. And that real knowledge is not what we know, not intuition, nor reason, nor instinct. When that degenerates and is confused, we call it intuition; when it degenerates more, we call it reason; and when it degenerates still more, we call it instinct. That knowledge itself is Vijnana, neither intuition, nor reason nor instinct. The nearest expression for it is all-knowingness. There is no limit to it, no combination in it. That bliss, when it gets clouded over, we call love, attraction for gross bodies or

fine bodies, or for ideas. This is only a distorted manifestation of that blessedness. Absolute Existence, absolute Knowledge, and absolute Blessedness are not qualities of the soul, but the essence; there is no difference between them and the soul. And the three are one; we see the one thing in three different aspects. They are beyond all relative knowledge. That eternal knowledge of the Self percolating through the brain of man becomes his intuition, reason, and so on. Its manifestation varies according to the medium through which it shines. As soul, there is no difference between man and the lowest animal, only the latter's brain is less developed and the manifestation through it which we call instinct is very dull. In a man the brain is much finer, so the manifestation is much clearer, and in the highest man it becomes entirely clear. So with existence; the existence which we know, the limited sphere of existence, is simply a reflection of that real existence which is the nature of the soul. So with bliss; that which we call love or attraction is but the reflection of the external blessedness of the Self. With manifestation comes limitation, but the unmanifested, the essential nature of the soul, is unlimited; to that blessedness there is no limit. But in love there is limitation. I love you one day, I hate you the next. My love increases one day and decreases the next, because it is only a manifestation.

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From *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*,  
2.458.



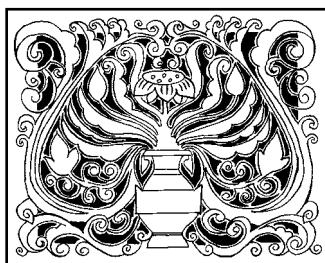
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Cover: Galaxy Messier 82  
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Traditional Wisdom	451
This Month	452
<i>Editorial: Moral Intelligence</i>	453
Consciousness	455
<i>Swami Satswarupananda</i>	
The Yoga of Same-sightedness	461
<i>Swami Vedananda</i>	
Varieties of Intelligence	465
<i>Br. Isharupachaitanya</i>	
Plato's Allegory of the Cave: A Vedantic Reading	472
<i>Dr Pramila Davidson</i>	
Spiritual Substance and Perfection in Indian Thought	478
<i>Rajeshri Trivedi</i>	
The Spiritual and Cultural Ethos of Modern Hindi Literature	482
<i>Prof. Awadhesh Pradhan</i>	
Girish and the Devotees of Sri Ramakrishna	490
<i>Swami Chetanananda</i>	
Reviews	494
Reports	497

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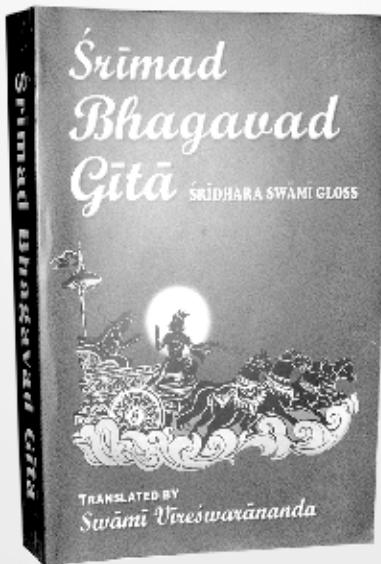
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उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राय वरान्निबोधत । Arise! Awake! And stop not till the goal is reached!

# Dhi: *Intuitive Vision*

**August 2009**  
**Vol. 114, No. 8**

यद्व त्यन्मित्रावरुणावृतादध्यादाथे  
 अनृतं स्वेन मन्युना दक्षस्य स्वेन मन्युना ।  
 युवोरित्थाधि सद्ग्रस्वपश्याम हिरण्ययम् ।  
 धीभिश्चन मनसा स्वेभिरक्षभिः सोमस्य स्वेभिरक्षभिः ॥

O Mitra and Varuna, as you bestow upon us the unenduring waters which you obtain from the sun, through your own energy, through the inherent energy of the vigorous, may we behold your golden forms in our sacrificial halls, with our intuitive vision, with our mind, with our own eyes, with the eyes owned by Soma. (Rig Veda, 1.139.2)

उषो न जारः पृथु पाजो अश्रेद्विव्युतदीद्यच्छोशुचानः ।  
व्रषा हरि: शुचिरा भाति भासा धियो हिन्वन उशतीरजीगः ॥

(Agni), like the lover of the dawn—bright, radiant, resplendent—displays his far-spreading lustre. Pure in his splendour shines the golden hero; our eager intuitive vision has he aroused and awakened. (7.10.1)

इन्द्रे अग्ना नमो बृहत्सुवृक्तिमेरयामहे ।  
धिया धेना अवस्यवः ॥

Being desirous of protection, we offer our resolute adorations, hymns and prayers, born of our intuitive vision, to Indra and Agni. (7.94.4)

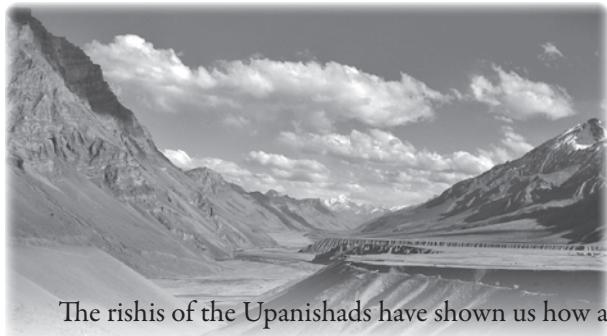
देवार्चनस्थानशौचभिक्षादौ वर्ततां वपुः ।  
 तारं जपतु वाक्तद्वयथत्वाम्नायमस्तकम् ॥  
 विष्णुं ध्यायतु धीर्यद्वा ब्रह्मानन्दे विलीयताम् ।  
 साक्ष्यहं किञ्चिदप्यत्र न कुर्वे नापि कास्ये ॥

Let the body be occupied with worship of deities, ritual ablutions, purifications, collection of alms, and the like; let the speech repeat the mantra and also the Upanishads, the crest of the Vedas; let the *dhī* meditate on Vishnu or be dissolved in Brahman; I am but a witness of these matters—I do nothing, nor do I get anything done.

(*Avadhuta Upanishad*, 24-5)

# THIS MONTH

Consciousness, awareness, and intelligence are closely related yet distinct concepts. While consciousness studies are still grappling with the implications of Vedic insights into the nature of consciousness, intelligence has been the subject of some very fruitful empirical and applied research. Among the different shades of intelligence, **Moral Intelligence**, despite being of utmost social importance, has remained poorly studied. This and related issues make up the current number.



The rishis of the Upanishads have shown us how a careful scrutiny of our commonplace experiences reveals the true nature of consciousness as the eternal, unitary, and immutable subject, capable of evolving into the objective world through a process of willing and of reacting to it with emotion. Swami Satswarananda, a former editor of *Prabuddha Bharata*, has analysed these issues cogently in his article **Consciousness**, which has been made available for publication by Swami Atmapriyananda, Vice Chancellor, Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda University.

The primary purpose of the Upanishadic discourse on consciousness is to enable its students to rediscover their true being as pure consciousness by detaching themselves from false identifications through the **Yoga of Same-sightedness**. This is brought home to us by Swami Vedananda of the Vedanta Society of Northern California, San Francisco.



Howard Gardner revolutionized our understanding of intelligence through his theory of 'multiple intelligences', at least seven varieties of which he categorically identified. Br. Isharupachaitanya of Ramakrishna Math, Belur, discusses the **Varieties of Intelligence**, with special emphasis on intellectual, emotional, and spiritual intelligence.

Scholars have long noted many interesting parallels between Vedic insights and Greek thought. **Plato's Allegory of the Cave: A Vedantic Reading** is a fresh study on these lines. The author, Dr Pramila Davidson, is a specialist in the history of ideas and mass communication from Pune.

Ms Rajeshri Trivedi, Lecturer, Department of Philosophy, Maharaja Sayajirao University, Baroda, takes a look at the concepts of self, Supreme Being, and liberation in the major systems of Indian philosophy to tell us about **Spiritual Substance and Perfection in Indian Thought**.

Prof. Awadhesh Pradhan, Department of Hindi, Banaras Hindu University, concludes his survey of the **Spiritual and Cultural Ethos of Modern Hindi Literature** with a review of the Dwivedi and Chhayavad eras and the more recent progressive and experimental schools.

Swami Chetanananda,  
Minister-in-Charge,  
Vedanta Society  
of St Louis, continues his research  
on the life and times  
of Girishchandra Ghosh

with a study of **Girish and the Devotees of Sri Ramakrishna**.

## EDITORIAL

# Moral Intelligence

Austerity, purity, fellow-feeling, and truth are the four qualities of dharma, represented by the four feet of your bull-form. Your three feet have been cut off, O Dharma, by the three forces of Adharma— austerity by egotism, purity by attachments, and fellow-feelings by blinding passions. O Dharma! Now there remains only one of your feet, namely truth, to sustain you. The evil spirit of Kali [Yuga], flourishing on untruth, is now out to cut off that foot also.

—*Parikshit to Dharma*

CORRUPTION is a major roadblock to progress in the majority of developing countries, and Indian society continues to be particularly hamstrung by it. India ranks a dismal eighty-fifth on the global corruption perception index and reports suggest that over 20,000 crore rupees are annually given in bribes by Indians. Besides large scams involving major government agencies as well as the corporate sector and individual operators, what has been particularly worrying is the widespread corruption faced by ordinary individuals on a day-to-day basis which has a particularly negative impact on society's moral fibre.

The moral disengagement of otherwise religious people is a particularly intriguing aspect of Indian society. Social psychologists believe that persistence of feudal ways—with primacy of allegiance to relations and acquaintances, deference to hierarchy, and the traditional practice of sharing gifts and favours—is one of the reasons for corrupt behaviour. Thus many Indians may feel greater guilt in not helping their relations secure a job than in using corrupt practices to do so.

It has also been suggested that there are significant cultural differences in perceptions of corruption. Mahathir Muhammad observed that 'Asians generally pursue their goals with others in

ways which are subtle, indirect, modulated, devious, non-judgemental, non-moralistic, and non-confrontational. Australians, in contrast, are the most direct, blunt, outspoken, some would say insensitive, people in the English speaking world.'

Daniel Goleman writes: 'Culture is a basket of frames. To the degree that frames differ from culture to culture, contacts between people from different lands can be sticky. For example, bribery is a normal part of doing business in much of the world, a fact that makes Americans indignant. But Americans have a style of frank openness that Mexicans may regard as weakness or treachery, that Japanese may see as boorish and crude. In many Asian countries, "no" is used little; "yes" can mean yes, no, or perhaps. ... In India, people can't bear to bring bad news, so they lie: the train they say, is "just coming", when in fact it is five hours late.'

Non-Westerners have also been quick 'to point to the gaps between Western principle and Western action. Hypocrisy, double standards, and "but nots" are the price of universalist pretensions. Democracy is promoted but not if it brings Islamic fundamentalists to power; non-proliferation is preached for Iran and Iraq but not for Israel; free trade is the elixir of economic growth but not for agriculture; human rights are an issue with China but not with Saudi Arabia. ... Double standards in practice are the unavoidable price of universal standards of principle.'

It would appear that realpolitik and corporate pragmatism render all moral considerations contingent on the possibility of immediate gains and that universal moral principles are a mere illusion. But a closer look at some of the important success stories in business belies this stereotype.

The Tatas have built a reputation for business integrity and social concern. Ratan Tata has this to

say about J R D Tata, who piloted the conglomerate through a significant portion of the last century: 'JRD's outstanding contribution, the greatest among the many he made, was to expand the group on the basis of principles and values and ethics. He worked in a world of regulations. He had the courage to object to them publicly, but he never broke the law. JRD imparted the discipline that he expected his people to follow. Never, not once, did he cut corners or find loopholes. Nor did he ask anyone to do so.'

JRD's biographer R M Lala asked him in 1979, 'Could it not be said that the other industrial groups have grown faster than the Tatas over the last years?' JRD replied with feeling as well as firmness, 'I have often thought of that. Had we resorted to some of the means that other companies did, we would have been twice as big as we are today. But I would not have it any other way.'

Doug Lennick and Fred Kiel, who have extensively researched the moral intelligence of business leaders, note: 'None [of the executives we queried] have stated that their work is only about increasing shareholder value. ... We discovered all the leaders we interviewed have a *moral compass*—a set of deeply held beliefs and values—that drives their personal and professional lives. They revealed beliefs such as being honest no matter what; standing up for what is right; being responsible and accountable for their actions; caring about the welfare of those who work for them; and owning up to mistakes and failures. They told us vivid stories about how such beliefs played into the choices they made and the way they behaved.'

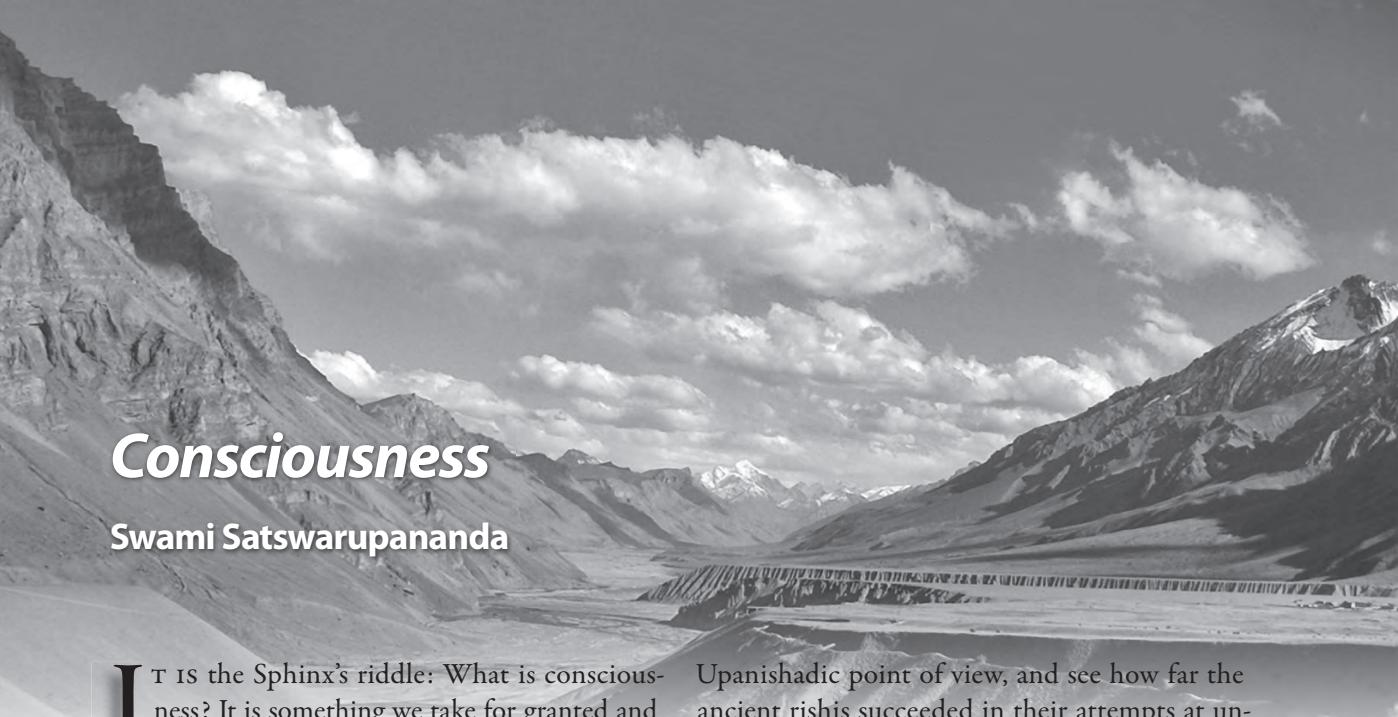
Lennick and Kiel have identified four characteristics of leaders who are morally intelligent as well as morally competent: integrity, responsibility, compassion, and forgiveness. They believe that these traits are universal markers of moral intelligence: 'Integrity is the hallmark of the morally intelligent person. When we act with integrity, we harmonize our behaviour to conform to universal human principles. We do what we know is right; we act in line with our principles and beliefs. If we

lack integrity, by definition we lack moral intelligence. Responsibility is another key attribute of the morally intelligent person. Only a person willing to take responsibility for her actions—and the consequences of those actions—will be able to ensure that her actions conform to universal human principles. Compassion is vital because caring about others not only communicates our respect for others, but creates a climate in which others will be compassionate towards us when we need it most. Forgiveness is a crucial principle, because without a tolerance for mistakes and the knowledge of our own imperfection, we are likely to be rigid, inflexible, and unable to engage with others in ways that promote our mutual good.'

The importance of honesty for personal psychic growth and integrity can hardly be gainsaid. Our brains and psyche are plastic organs that are constantly being moulded by our experiences and mental responses. It is well known that our perceptions and cognitions are overwhelmingly determined by our subconscious and unconscious minds, and that our brains are wired to generate false memories, fill up gaps in information, and provide dubious explanations for inexplicable thoughts and actions. The validity of objective knowledge is also difficult to establish. Correspondence with objective facts, coherence with existing knowledge, and practical value are some of the tests of valid knowledge. But our minds can deceive us on each of these counts.

The situation turns more sinister when we consciously choose to distort information for personal material gains. Not only does such deception have harmful social repercussions, it also boomerangs on us by compromising our personal ability to judge between truth and untruth.

Truthfulness is also the essence of spirituality. Sri Ramakrishna reminds us that 'truthfulness alone constitutes the spiritual discipline of the Kali Yuga. If a man clings tenaciously to truth he ultimately realizes God. Without this regard for truth, one gradually loses everything.' Moral intelligence and moral competence may well be the most prized of our possessions. We can ill afford to lose them.



# Consciousness

Swami Satswarananda

IT IS the Sphinx's riddle: What is consciousness? It is something we take for granted and make use of every moment of our lives, without which we are not what we think ourselves to be, and yet when we want to know it a little deeply, it eludes us. When we know it, our life's aim is fulfilled, we are free from all anxieties, all troubles.

We make use of words like knowledge, consciousness, awareness, intuition, almost as synonyms. Etymology, so far as abstract things are concerned, does not help us much. Usage takes us a long way, but leaves us short of the destination. Philosophical books, with their various arguments and conclusions, confuse us. All this because they try to explain that which is at the root of all explanations, and nothing can explain itself by itself. Any argument or explanation, talk or discussion, from start to finish, is all consciousness. Neither in dreams nor in the waking state are we free of it even for a split moment. Being always in and surrounded by it, how can we say what it is? For a thing to be known, it must be put in front of us. Being everywhere under all conditions, in and around us as well as in and around other things and beings, it cannot be known, except in bits, leaving out an almost infinite part of it, thus giving us the uncomfortable feeling that what little we know does not authorize us to assert we have known it. Still, no one, once they start thinking about it, can ever remain satisfied with a piecemeal knowledge of it.

We shall try to approach the problem from the

Upanishadic point of view, and see how far the ancient rishis succeeded in their attempts at unravelling the mystery of consciousness. But as we have to put their thoughts and words into English, we have to add notes on the Sanskrit words and phrases the rishis have used, and to their English equivalents as well.

## **Chit: Feeling-consciousness**

*Chit* is the word the seers have used to indicate that which we mean by 'consciousness'. The nearest translation of this Sanskrit word, especially as it is used in the Upanishads, is contained in what Sir John Woodroffe says: 'It is a feeling-consciousness.' Explaining this compound word will lead us deep into its content. Sir John has evidently not used 'feeling' to distinguish it from 'thinking' and 'willing', which, on the face of it, would be absurd—both 'thinking' and 'willing' are modes of consciousness and, therefore, consciousness per se. But 'thinking' and 'willing' include an element of 'activeness' which is absent in the connotation of *chit*. Again, the English words 'knowledge' and 'awareness' have the same distinction in their implications. When we say 'we know' we mean we exerted ourselves, as a result of which we know. But when we say 'we are conscious of it' we do not mean we have put forth any energy for being conscious of it. But that does not debar the entry of exertion altogether; we might have exerted previously, the result of which,

at the present moment, is our being 'conscious of it'. In order to bring out this subtle distinction, Sir John has added 'feeling' to 'consciousness'. *Chit* is never active; it is never an agent of any kind of activity. It simply *is*, and it is by its mere presence that 'we know', 'we are conscious of'.

Why have the rishis laid so much emphasis on this passivity of *chit*, we may ask. It is because in our passive condition alone are we aware that we know, or are conscious of, anything. In other words, in the passive state we are consciousness itself. At other times we deal with various things—with objects—to such an extent that we forget we are acting consciously, deliberately. Even when we appear to be inactive, not engaged in any particular work, sitting idle, our mind or consciousness is full of ideas or concepts—which, again, are objects—to the detriment of the awareness of consciousness itself. We have to make a little effort to drive out all objects and feel the presence of consciousness—to feel our feeling, so to say. When the mind is thus made vacant, we get to know that our mind is consciousness; *sat*, our ultimate nature, our being, is also *chit*, consciousness.

It may be urged that here also there is activity—activity in driving out the objects that cover consciousness. True, but this activity is needed only to drive out things that are not consciousness, and not in 'knowing' consciousness. Our idea is not to deny activity but only to note its absence in the essence of consciousness. Activity forces itself on our consciousness from all sides. To deny that would be sheer madness. In eliminating the objects that cover consciousness we are not producing consciousness but only clearing the encrustation overlaying it—when the covering is removed the thing covered is not produced afresh, only its presence is revealed. So activity does not enter into the constitution or nature of consciousness, which is a homogeneous entity and not a compound. Consciousness is consciousness alone; no attribute, no activity is admissible therein.

### ***Is Matter Independent of Consciousness?***

When we comprehend the above fact, we know consciousness to be something that is not only un-

limited but also something that cannot be limited by any effort of man or nature, for consciousness is involved in all our efforts, in all limited persons and things. There can be no experience without its involvement—it is *anubhava*, experience, itself. Do we then deny the existence of matter as an entity distinct from consciousness, different from it? We say that the so-called Kantian thing-in-itself, that unknown and unknowable thing, that axiomatic truth without which the universe cannot be explained, is not so very axiomatic or unavoidable as to necessarily be taken for granted. At best we can say that it may or may not exist. The entire universe can very well be explained without it, provided we understand consciousness properly. The experience of our dream state has been explained in terms of consciousness alone. There all things and acts, subjects and objects, are made up of consciousness alone; and yet a full drama is enacted as vividly as in the waking state. If that is possible, why can it not be done for the waking state as well? As long as the dream lasts, there is interplay of consciousness and matter, which, on coming out of the dream, we know to be merely a fabrication of consciousness. It cannot be argued that dream objects are images of real material objects of the waking state, for that would involve a *petitio principii*. We are discussing if matter exists apart from consciousness and are not entitled to take its existence for granted.

All our amorphous objections will vanish if we view consciousness not in the narrow sense in which it is generally conceived but in the sense that Vedanta suggests: as something that expresses itself as both the matter and consciousness we are familiar with. This means that consciousness appears as matter when it is an object of thought or experience and as the ordinary consciousness of our everyday life when it is the subject, the thinking and understanding principle. Moreover, if we but try a little to grasp it, we see that in it rests and plays—bobbing up and down, as it were—everything that is experienced. And what is outside it? We are not entitled to say anything on this matter; nay, we cannot even formulate this question logically, for the

formulation itself involves consciousness. So *chit*, the real consciousness, the primary consciousness of Vedanta, appears both as matter and as conventional consciousness: *vyavaharika chit*. This real *chit* is *sat-chit*, existence-consciousness, while our empirical consciousness is a *chitta-vritti*, mode of consciousness, a mixture of the subject and the object. For the same reason even the limited subject is a *vritti*, a mode of consciousness.

Do we not actually see that all our mundane objects of thought appear as matter? For example, all the ‘first person singulars’—the experiencing beings—experience themselves as consciousness or modes of it; and the same first person singulars, when viewed by others, are seen as bodies. In fact, we ourselves, when we look at ‘us’, take ourselves to be bodies; but when we reason, consider things a little deeply, look inwards, we perceive ourselves as mind or consciousness. If we are observant and reason carefully, we shall find that during a very large portion of our lives we are consciousness; only when we are engaged in some physical work do we forget ourselves and identify ourselves with our bodies. When we think, reason, feel, plan, or even sit idle, we are consciousness; bodily exercises force us out of ourselves to what we call the material plane, which again is upheld by consciousness. It is for this reason that in Vedanta the *jada*, insentient, is equated with the *vishaya*, object: all objects are material, all matter is objective. Conversely, all subjects are constituted by conventional consciousness. *Sat-chit*, the real primary consciousness, is the bedrock supporting all planes of existence.

### **Permanence and Unceasing Change**

So much for the reason why such great emphasis is laid on the passivity of *chit*. Standing on the bedrock of consciousness, and thus being sure of our own position in the investigation, we can go on testing, on the touchstone of reason, the existence and value of other objects, and even that of the touchstone itself. If we are ourselves shaky, if we are nothing but helpless changefulness—being one thing this moment and another the next—what

faith can one place in the conclusions we draw? In such a situation all knowledge acquired by human labour over the millennia will be in jeopardy. Even for the establishment of relativity something permanent must needs be assumed. When the assumption is questioned—and it is bound to be questioned—we land in an infinite regress. The entire framework of logic, or the laws of thought or consciousness, is based on an integral substance with unshaken and unshakable permanence at its centre. Rather, everywhere—from the centre to the nowhere-to-be-found periphery—there runs an immovable permanence engaged in a mad dance of restless appearances. Acharya Shankara has made this clear in his commentary on verse 2.16 of the Bhagavadgita: ‘Of the unreal there is no being; the real has no non-existence. The nature of both these, indeed, has been realized by the seers of Truth.’

Now crops up an important question: If consciousness is really passive, inactive, and ubiquitous, and is the only thing that exists, how is it that we find forces and activities all around us, right down to the seeming quiet of the proton in the atomic nucleus? How does one explain the existence of the force that has built up this universe and is still building, breaking, and rebuilding it?

Science has shown us how relative forces are generated—one from the other—and how even the most innocent-looking ingredients of the atomic nucleus are full of energy. Again, we need no lesson in psychology to be convinced that even in our internal world there is a perpetual movement of thoughts and ideas, of emotions and volitions. So, in or out, forces and movements are everywhere—acting, reacting, coalescing, and interchanging. But the ‘where’ of it has not been pushed to the ultimate point. We can go further and say, with the cumulative experience of the entire thinking humanity, that all these movements occur in, around, and with objects, but never in the subject. The deeper we dive into the subject, the quieter is our experience; and when the rock bottom of consciousness is reached, there is absolute calm. What conclusion can we draw from this phenomenon? Is not the

consciousness that comprises the subject as well as the object either both passive and active—involving rest and motion—or neither of them? As the latter alternative contradicts our experience of rest and motion in all the effects we deal with every moment of our lives, their causes must also contain both; so the former alternative alone is rational. Therefore, consciousness is both passive and active, static and dynamic. But the more we try to understand it as it is, apart from its adjuncts, the more passive it appears. And when we are busy with objects we forget all about it, and it disappears from our view. Hence, consciousness of consciousness—that is, self-consciousness—is bound to be passive, or else we do not have it at all; as we said, it disappears! But ‘consciousness of consciousness’ is an absurdity, for it will lead to ‘consciousness of consciousness of consciousness’ *ad infinitum*. Therefore, consciousness and self-consciousness are not two things but one; consciousness is always conscious of itself. In every conception—that is, the act of forming a concept—consciousness knows itself as well as the object. The *Kena Upanishad* asserts: ‘Brahman, or Consciousness, is truly known when it is known with every state of consciousness.’

Passivity and activity are our views of consciousness as we look at it in relation to the subject and the object. What it is in itself we, its products, cannot say. Here, ‘we’ means our personalities comprising our body, mind, and other related entities. But for all practical purposes, for our experience, *vyavahara*, we have to admit both the subject and the object. When the veracity of experience is doubted or negated, we have no right to utter a word or think a thought. Vedanta admits it but gives the highest place to depth-consciousness, calling it intuition, the experience beyond all experiences involving a subject-object relationship. This is called *paramarthika-satta*, ultimate being. The word *paramarthika* is made up of two terms: *para*-*ama*, meaning ‘supreme’, and *artha*, which has two meanings—‘entity’ and ‘purpose’ or ‘goal’. When *artha* is taken to mean ‘entity’ the compound denotes ‘supreme entity’, that beyond which no ex-

perience is possible; and when it is taken to mean ‘purpose’ or ‘goal of life’ the compound means ‘ultimate end of life’. What is this ultimate end? Gaining absolute freedom: our birthright, our ultimate nature. When one is truly identified with that all-pervading lone consciousness, all obstacles, fears, and anxieties cease, since all the elements that obstruct, terrorize, and make one anxious are engulfed by one’s self, the basic intuition. Only then can one laugh at all dangers or threats, like the gynosophist who, when threatened with death by Alexander told him to his face: ‘Monarch of this tiny world, you never told a greater lie in your life! You to kill me, the all-pervading entity, devoid altogether of all touch of duality!’

Be that as it may, when we are in quest of the nature of this unique consciousness or intuition we cannot take only one side of our experience and ignore the other, accept passivity alone to be its ultimate nature and reject activity or the entire objective world consisting of ceaseless activity. Nor can we relegate the latter to a secondary place. Both are equally important, equally necessary for explaining our experiences and the universe, the objects of our adventure. The philosopher’s quest for the mythical stone, the adventurer’s urge for grasping the whole Truth, the nature of Reality, is perennially insistent; they can never have rest, peace, or freedom without satisfying themselves fully about the nature of the integral Reality.

As there are two kinds of experiences—that of pure consciousness in the depths of our being and that of the objective world full of dynamic forces—that range from our inner sense organ, the mind, to the utmost reaches of the spatial universe, we must admit that both passivity and activity constitute the ultimate Reality. What appears as an effect must necessarily be potentially present or involved in the cause.

We may go one step further and say that passivity and activity are not two different, far less opposite, entities; the difference is one of degree, much like the difference between darkness and light. Most of the so-called contradictory terms

and concepts—heat and cold, ease and disease, moral and immoral—belong to this group. And ‘degree’ is a matter of human convention; in reality, human intelligence has cut into pieces, for convenience of measurement, what is actually a continuous flow. So passivity and activity are two conventional terms indicative of the two extremes of a single continuum.

### ***Evolution of Consciousness***

As we live in a world of conventions, our explanation of things, of acts and facts, must also be conventional. This is what the Vedantins indicate by the expression *vyavaharika satya*, conventional truth. Hence, though intuition or basic consciousness is one homogeneous ‘force-substance’, it appears and acts as many, a fact testified to by our experience. How this is brought about has been shown by the scientists through the theory of evolution. But this is an explanation from the point of view of matter. How the bricks of the universe, the subatomic particles, have slowly built up the exceedingly beautiful universe is now known to a very large section of humankind. It is an extremely slow process that began when there was no one to observe and will continue when there will be no one to adore or weep. But from the point of view of consciousness it is a different story altogether, somewhat similar to the biblical Creation story: ‘And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.’ But in the Bible the Lord had to utter one word to create one thing, then another word to create another thing, and so on. This means Creation took some time, however little, to come to the state we are in. Whereas from the point of view of consciousness the one appears as many in an instant—the entire universe with its unimaginable varieties of things, of processes and finished products, appears in the twinkle of an eye. From the almost unconscious deep sleep, through light dreamless sleep, to the waking state, if one tries to observe carefully, one will find how from one homogeneous consciousness of being alone we wake up to this maddening multiplicity. If we have developed sufficient control over our mind,

we can give it the suggestion, before falling asleep, that it should try to observe the change that occurs when we pass from the deep-sleep condition to the dream state. Then we shall find that here also, from the unity of being, comes the dream multiplicity all of a sudden. In both the above cases it is a sudden change: unity suddenly bursts forth into multiplicity. No intervening process is involved in it: that which was appearing as one—that too, a vague one—appears as many the next moment. But we have no doubt that it is the same I-consciousness, the observer, that persists all through.

### ***The Strata of Consciousness***

The above phenomena of deep sleep, dream, and waking state lead us to assert that: (i) There are varying strata of consciousness giving us different kinds of experience. (ii) One stratum appears to be absolutely homogeneous. No, we cannot even say that, for appearance needs two things: the thing appearing and the person to whom it appears. But this state is a vivid experience of something that positively exists. The word ‘experience’ also confuses us in the same way. In fact, there is no word to express this state adequately; yet it is a positive something and the basis of everything else. (iii) In all other strata there is the experience of a subject, the knower, and of an object, the known. But the subject permeating the objects is always one, whether the object be one or many. All objects are held together by the subject, whose ‘appearance’ means annihilation of the entire object-world; the opposite, however, is not true. This annihilation does not necessarily mean that the objective world goes out of existence. It simply means that there remains no informer to say whether the world of objects exists or not. Someone has to testify to the existence of things. In the absence of such a person, who will say that such-and-such a thing exists? (iv) Though at any particular moment there might be only one object present in our mind, the objective world, as such, is a multiplicity: objects are discrete and distinct, one from another. They are held together and utilized by the subject.

### **Willing-consciousness and the Objective World**

The multiplicity referred to above is the experience of the ordinary busy person. Thinkers, scientists, and philosophers, however, see in this objective world not mere multiplicity but unity as well. Their thoughts lead them to accept unity in diversity and diversity in unity in the entire world of objects, internal or external. They have observed that underlying diversity there is a unity throughout. Through all growth and transformation something stands out—some substance, force, or substance-force that abides as the identity of the thing undergoing change. John is John as long as he lives, in spite of all the changes his body and mind undergo throughout the fifty years of his life. Man is man, not an ass, as long as one man survives. A living being is a living being, not a clod of earth, as long as life lasts. It is sometimes difficult to define these unities—leading on to one ground unity—but if we are to live and act we have to admit the existence of such unities. Diversity, however, is so aggressively obvious that it needs no elaboration. We are entitled to extend this conclusion of thinking men to all strata of consciousness—the super-conscious or the subconscious, the dream state or the waking—wherever there is a subject-object dichotomy. Through all dual spheres runs this scheme of unity in diversity and diversity in unity. This vision can well be extended to the point where consciousness is a distinction without a difference, the same entity looked at from two standpoints—as it is in itself and as it stands in relation to the manifested world, or, more precisely, as ‘feeling-consciousness’ and ‘willing-consciousness’. Even in the state of thought or idea, when the manifested realities are yet to be, they exist, inasmuch as without this admission objective willing becomes useless. A thing that does not exist cannot be thought of, cannot be willed into existence. But this existence is potential existence, even as the existence of the tree is, in the seed, potential.

The Upanishads have recorded the creative urge in no uncertain terms: ‘*Bahu syam, prajayeya; I shall be many, I shall create.*’ Such passages had at first been

relegated to a secondary place and later dismissed as fiction. But truth will perhaps be served better and the main purpose of the scriptures—to show humans the path of liberation—will be more adequately fulfilled if they are given as much importance as other Vedantic statements. This will to create, *sisriksha*, on the part of the basic consciousness has been expressed in various ways throughout the Hindu scriptures, from the most ancient days to modern times. In fact, it is a major scriptural theme, compared to which ‘the way to liberation, moksha,’ occupies an insignificant part. And the reason is not hard to find: moksha is sought after by only a rare handful of people. So, in understanding the ultimate Truth the phase of ‘willing-consciousness’ must be accepted; otherwise its integrality will be abridged. This understanding has come to modern Hindus in an unbroken tradition stretching back over several millennia.

### **Liberating Unity of Being**

It must, at the same time, be admitted that no amount of roaming about or diving deep into the analysis and synthesis of ‘willing-consciousness’ will give humans moksha. As long as duality, or plurality, even a shadow of it, lasts, there is no liberation; the little self, narrow and egoistic, will not leave us. It is only the direct experience of the ‘unity of being’, of that homogeneous all-pervading consciousness, that will release humans abidingly from the bondage of the world, from the sense of exclusiveness and otherness pervading one’s personality. Only having had that abiding, never-ceasing sense of unity with the whole universe can one be absolutely free, since the objects that bind or give trouble—nay, even bondages and troubles themselves—are felt, in that condition, as one’s very being, as the ‘feeling-consciousness’. This ‘feeling-consciousness’ is unshaken and unshakable, a mere observer consciousness, never taking any part in any of the whirling activities of the world, but which, as the ‘willing-consciousness’, is unceasingly creating the force that makes the universe, is the source and the sustenance of all discrete things, from the smallest to the most enormous.

(Continued on page 481)

# The Yoga of Same-sightedness

Swami Vedananda

THE idea and practice of same-sightedness was already well known even in the oldest Upanishads. It received further impetus in many passages of the Bhagavadgita. Those who uphold the spiritual concept of same-sightedness maintain that, regardless of the vast superficial differences among objects and ideas, they are in essence the same Reality appearing variously: ‘*Ekam sat viprā bahudhā vadanti*; Truth is one, sages speak of it variously.’<sup>1</sup> This is best illustrated by referring to some of the scriptural passages that embody this idea.

## Same-sightedness in the Scriptures

The *Isha Upanishad* opens with the famous phrase ‘*Īśā vāsyam-idam sarvam yat-kiñca jagatyām jagat*; all this, whatever moves in this world, is to be covered with the Lord’<sup>2</sup> and further states that it is by this renunciation of manifoldness that true enjoyment takes place.

The *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* gives a long list of things that are said to be dear to human beings, and categorically states that their attractive nature is due not to the things themselves but to the attractiveness of the Self, the Atman, as the reality within everything.<sup>3</sup> In the same Upanishad, implying the non-dual nature of ultimate Reality, it is stated: ‘*Dvitiyād-vai bhayam bhavati*; from a second entity comes fear’ (1.4.2). The expression ‘*Neha nānā’sti kiñcana*; there is no multiplicity, no manifoldness here’ is found in several Upanishads.<sup>4</sup> The statement ‘*Sarvam khalvidam brahma*; all this is indeed Brahman’<sup>5</sup> is one of the fundamental expressions of this philosophy.

The Gita states this idea very explicitly: ‘*Siddhy-asiddhyoh samo bhūtvā samatvam yoga ucyate*; being same-sighted with regard to success and fail-

ure, (this) sameness is called yoga.’<sup>6</sup> Sri Krishna speaks of ‘*sama-loṣṭāśma-kāñcanah*; to whom a lump of earth, stone, and gold are the same’ (6.8), and of ‘*samabuddhibh*, same attitude of mind, towards well-wishers, relatives, friends, foes, neutrals, arbiters, the hateful, the righteous, and the unrighteous, or, in summary, towards everyone (6.9). He also advises us to be ‘*sarvatra sama-darśanah*; seeing everything and everyone everywhere from the viewpoint of same-sightedness’, which is explained in the next verse as follows: ‘Seeing God—personal or impersonal—in all things, and seeing all things in God’ (6.29). Enumerating the attributes of the jnani, Sri Krishna uses the term *sama-cittatvam*, the state of even-mindedness (13.9), which concept he later elaborates: ‘*samam sarvesu bhūtesu tiṣṭhantam paramesvaram*; (seeing) the same supreme God established in all beings’; ‘*vinaśyatsu avinaśyantam*; the undying, the immortal, in the dying’ (13.27). This is again referred to in the next verse as ‘*samam paśyan hi sarvatra samavasthitam-iśvaram*; seeing the same Lord present in the same way everywhere’. Similar ideas are repeated elsewhere in the Gita; for instance, in the list of characteristics of the person who has transcended the *guṇas* (14.24–5), and where it is said that the wise look upon a learned scholar filled with humility, or upon a cow, an elephant, a dog, or even an eater of dogs with equal regard, that is, with an eye to their basic sameness (5.18). Many spiritual aspirants have formed the habit of repeating before every meal a verse from the Gita (4.24) which is a very explicit statement of the same idea.

There thus seems to be great insistence on the part of ancient teachers of Vedanta on this astounding fact, completely antagonistic to our normal experience, that the cause of all our problems is the

perception of multiplicity, and that the solution lies in constantly trying to see the basic oneness that underlies all apparent differences. It is further maintained that it is only this underlying oneness that gives the perceived differences their apparent value. It is just this that makes the practice and realization of spiritual truths so difficult. It requires a new vision. It presents a great challenge and amounts to a true leap of faith. Let us examine here some of the challenges to and some of the supporting concepts for these ultimate statements which form the fundamental outlook on life upheld by Vedanta.

### ***Limitations of the Scientific Method***

We could start by simply stating the fundamental truths of the Upanishads as axioms, draw conclusions from them, and then modify the axioms if the derived conclusions do not accord with observations. This is, after all, the scientific method. It suffers, however, from this difficulty: all observations require instruments. Normally in such sciences as physics, chemistry, and astronomy the instruments are separate from the observer and are impersonal. We can verify their accuracy empirically. On the other hand, when we try to verify the truths of philosophy and religion the main instrument of observation is the mind of the observer. As a result, one cannot be entirely objective. Furthermore, the instruments of observation are also the objects of observation. We cannot, therefore, adhere to one of the basic classical requirements of scientific objectivity, which assumes that the system being observed has well defined boundaries and is separate from the observer. It is true that modern physics has been forced to acknowledge that the observer is an inseparable part of every observation, but the inclusion of the observer has introduced an element of randomness and unpredictability that itself mars the historical predictability and clarity of scientific conclusions.

There are two further difficulties in a straightforward application of the scientific method for verification of the non-duality advocated in the Vedantic scriptures. The first is that both observer

and observed are said to include not only their physical and mental aspects, but something else which is beyond both body and mind, and this is consciousness itself, which Vedanta identifies as being fundamental and beyond the reach of the mind: *avāni-manas-agocaram*. One of the defining characteristics of religion itself, in general, is the introduction of such a controlling and independent element inherently inaccessible to the usual modes of verification. The second of these difficulties is that the process of verification may not be completed in a single lifetime. For verifying Vedantic scriptural truths the only tool accessible to us is the mind, which, despite its limitations, must be trained to carry us to the boundaries of the realm of pure consciousness, from where that ocean of Reality is said to be palpably experienced. Profound retraining and reorientation of the mind is required to accomplish this; one would hardly be expected to finish the task in the time usually available to us, and therefore a modified approach is required.

In order to properly evaluate spiritual truths, consciousness itself must be transformed from the relative consciousness of external realities to the experience of consciousness as it is in itself. In other words, in order to test the theory that asserts the existence of the Atman we have to transform ourselves totally into what we are trying to perceive. We start by assuming that the scriptures and the teachers have assessed reality correctly. We ourselves then try to see things also in that way. If eventually we succeed, that is thought to be sufficient to verify the original assertion.

This method is open to the charge of non-objectivity or self-hypnosis, but this objection cannot be sustained. Everything that human beings learn is learned in this same way. We do as we see others do. The scientific method itself, on the other hand, is not nearly so accurate, impersonal, and objective as we would like to believe. All observations are subject to interpretation, and any particular interpretation is necessarily coloured by the personality and experience of the interpreter. A further objection is that results are generally and neces-

sarily statistical in nature. The result of a scientific analysis is expressed as a certain number, say  $x$ , with an associated error,  $\Delta x$ , and an associated confidence level, expressed as a percentage, so that any future experiment will reveal a result in the range ' $x \pm \Delta x$ '. Such a result is inherently imprecise, and yet this method is universally used as proof of the truth or falsity of scientific assertions. This is the best one can hope to do on the physical and mental levels. Truth, on these levels, comes to us shrouded in such vagueness and uncertainty; though of course, on the average, it works out admirably and great progress is made through it.

But the farther we go, the farther we have to go. There is no end in sight anywhere. Nothing is conclusive. Each experiment leads to a further experiment; each refinement of technique to a further refinement. As the accuracy of measurement increases, new effects, previously hidden by the inaccuracy of the measurement, are discovered. There is no end in sight. It was thought that sending a telescope out beyond the earth's atmosphere would reveal, perhaps, a thinning out of the number of visible galaxies, or some indication of the nature of the totality of the cosmos—but no such situation was found. As far as one can detect, the universe stretches on. It seems limitless, and even if a limit were found, it and all its parts are purely mechanistic. There is nothing new there. You can add to it all the myriads of details such as black holes, vibrating strings, additional dimensions, big bangs, and the like, but the quality of the totality is not changed. It deals only with the physical and the psychological. No new element is added, no matter how quantum mechanical and relativistic it becomes.

### **Accessing the Spiritual Level**

On the spiritual level we are also faced, at the lower reaches, with similar uncertainties in our verification of truth. For a long time we find very little—if any—progress. We see only partially and dimly. We are obliged to assume a great deal. The quest for truth on the spiritual level, however, has

certain distinct features that elevate it above the ordinary. First, it starts with the assumption of infinity in all dimensions of experience. Suppose we think of ourselves as being helplessly confronted by a universe that is impersonal and frightful because of its unimaginable vastness. Not a problem. Who perceives this universe? I am the perceiver. The universe is reflected in my mind. Where are the limits of my mind? I cannot find any limits to it. My mind is as infinite as the universe because the whole of what can be observed or thought or imagined can be reflected in it. Even physically, I am infinite. Why? Because I cannot find an end to even my physical being. Where does the body end? If one looks at the surface of any substance sub-microscopically, one does not find a distinct boundary. There is instead a region of decreasing intensity of molecules. Every material has a 'vapour pressure' caused by some molecules that escape from, and are reabsorbed into, the surface of the material. Where exactly does the 'I' end, and where does the 'not I' begin? And in what sense are even those molecules just within the surface related to the entity that I call 'I'? And then, within every few months or years, virtually every molecule of that 'I' has been replaced and has gone somewhere else. In that sense, my own physical being of some years ago is now spread over much of the globe—spread by air currents, spread by the flow of rivers. In that same sense, every body of water must now contain some water from one or more of the holy rivers—the Ganga or the Kaveri or the Jordan! The universe is one in every respect. There are no clearly defined boundaries anywhere.

On the mental level also, there is palpably only one reality. Certainly, at this level, all human beings are similar in easily understandable ways. All we need to do is to divest ourselves of the film of personality that clouds our vision and we will then see that what we find fundamental and necessary for our peace, joy, and fulfilment, is echoed and re-echoed around the world in spite of the apparently wide divergences existing on the surface. Animals also

partake of this oneness, as is easily seen by anyone who observes their behaviour closely.

Therefore, in the quest for truth at the spiritual level, just as one can start with the perception of infinity in what is immediately available to us—the physical and mental aspects of experience—thus seemingly bursting all physical and mental limitations, so also one can fully embrace the spiritual dimension to which, actually speaking, we are still strangers. To do this signals our revolt against the idea that we only consist of body and mind, both of which must inevitably fail us. At this point we have no proof whatsoever, beyond the words of the sages, that an undecaying spiritual reality exists; but this revolt against the ordinary pedestrian existence, itself is energizing and inspiring. Furthermore, if we give up the spiritual quest simply because we have no personal verification of its validity, we deprive ourselves of the only way out. Without the active quest for the beyond we can only go round and round here below, never achieving anything new.

God, or the spiritual Reality, is a name for infinity in all respects. It is the existence of all that exists, the factor of consciousness in all awareness, the unclouded peace of pure being, the pure love of total acceptance. We see these aspects reflected in the lives of the great sages of the world. We are assured by them of the all-encompassing nature of this Reality. If this is so, then there should be some sign in this mortal world of the presence and action of the immortal Being. Historically, this is said to manifest here in three ways, and our path must be to try to discover its presence here.

God, the ultimate spiritual principle, is said to manifest here first of all as the inner ruler, the soul of our souls, the *antaryāmin*, described as ‘residing in the hearts of all, making all beings revolve as though mounted on a machine’ (18.61). God is further said to manifest here, from time to time, as an incarnate being of great power whose wide and beneficent influence lasts for untold ages, benefiting and uplifting all beings. And God is also thought of as the ordainer of the cosmos and the world cycles, the controller of the karma or destiny of everything.

And all these three are but different readings of the infinite and eternal Reality, the essence and substance of everything, one only, without a second—the Brahman of the Upanishads. In our attempt to verify the fundamental tenets of the scriptures, we can approach any of these aspects of Reality in order to see if it will lead us to the ultimate Truth that we are seeking. The four yogas—bhakti, jnana, karma, and raja—are the historical and well-trodden paths to proceed further.

If the very same Truth is really to be experienced in the very same way everywhere and under all conditions and circumstances, as the scriptures say, then it must follow that wherever we look, in whatever way we begin, howsoever we proceed, whatever path we follow, we can never move outside the blazing zone of light wherein that Reality shines. That Truth should be obvious and accessible to all of us even now. There should be no question of being qualified or unqualified, prepared or unprepared, ready or unready, a householder or a monastic. The statements of the scriptures that were quoted earlier make no such distinctions. They simply state these truths as being self-evident, seeming to say: ‘This is the Truth. Open your eyes. See it.’ And further, ‘*Manasaivedam-āptavyam*; it is indeed attainable by the mind.’<sup>7</sup> Of course, it is also ‘*avāñ-manas-agocaram*; beyond the reach of speech and mind’. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that pure intellect and pure Atman are one and the same. The implication seems to be that the intellect, when unpurified—that is, when it is dealing with the material and mental aspects of existence—is gross only and unable to perceive the spiritual reality within the gross covering. When the intellect is purified of its concern with external grossness, it attains the ability to penetrate the spiritual reality within. Moreover, whoever penetrates to the vision of the spiritual essence, realizes oneness with that and actually becomes that: *Brahma veda brahmaiva bhavati*.<sup>8</sup> That is the ultimate proof of the extraordinary assertions of the scriptures quoted earlier. The proof of ‘That’ is indeed that we can become ‘That’.

(Continued on page 489)

# Varieties of Intelligence

Br. Isharupachaitanya

THESE are some terms that we use very often but that are not easy to define. ‘Intelligence’ is one such term. The word ‘intelligence’ comes from the Latin *intelligentia*, and this from the verb *intelligere*, a variant of *intellegere*, ‘to understand’, which in turn is derived from *inter*, ‘between’, and *legere*, ‘to choose’—literally, ‘choosing between’.

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* says that intelligence is (i) the ability to learn or understand or deal with new or trying situations: reason; also: the skilled use of reason; (ii) the ability to apply knowledge to manipulate one’s environment or to think abstractly as measured by objective criteria (as tests); (iii) the act of understanding: comprehension.

Another definition of intelligence comes from ‘Mainstream Science on Intelligence’, which was signed by 52 intelligence researchers in 1994: ‘A very general mental capability that, among other things, involves the ability to reason, plan, solve problems, think abstractly, comprehend complex ideas, learn quickly and learn from experience. It is not merely book learning, a narrow academic skill, or test-taking smarts. Rather, it reflects a broader and deeper capability for comprehending our surroundings—“catching on”, “making sense” of things, or “figuring out” what to do.’<sup>1</sup>

## Multiple Intelligences

‘Multiple Intelligences’ is a psychological and educational theory which proposes that an array of different kinds of intelligence exists in each human being. Psychologist Howard Gardner suggests that each individual manifests varying levels of different types of intelligence, and thus each person has a unique cognitive profile. Gardner’s theory argues that intelligence, as it is traditionally defined, does not adequately encompass the wide variety of abilities humans display.

He originally identified seven core intelligences (see Table 1). In 1999 he added an eighth, the naturalistic intelligence, and indicated that there may be another, the existential intelligence.<sup>2</sup>

Danah Zohar, in her book *Spiritual Intelligence, The Ultimate Intelligence*, argues that all our probable kinds of intelligence can be linked to one of the three basic neural systems in the brain, and that Gardner’s classification of intelligence is actually a variation of three basic varieties of intelligence and their associated neural arrangements. According to Zohar, the three basic types of intelligence are (i) intellectual intelligence, (ii) emotional intelligence, and (iii) spiritual intelligence.<sup>4</sup> Though ‘Q’ originally stood for ‘quotient’, IQ, EQ, and SQ are used to represent, for convenience, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual intelligence respectively.

Apart from the all-too-popular IQ, in recent times EQ and SQ have also been the subject of a considerable amount of research by various groups. We take here a brief tour of these three types of intelligence.

## Intellectual Intelligence



Intellectual or rational intelligence refers to the intelligence required to solve logical or strategic problems. Psychologists have devised tests for measuring it, and these tests have become the standard for sorting people according to their degree of intelligence, and thus their putative abilities. IQ tests have been found to be predictive of later intellectual achievement, such as educational qualification. They tell us about the rational capabilities of the person under evaluation.

Psychologist Charles Spearman proposed, way back in 1904, that there must be some general factor of intelligence that the tests were measuring. He

**Table I – The Seven Types of Intelligence<sup>3</sup>**

Type of Intelligence	Suggestions for Improvement
<b>Logical-Mathematical Intelligence</b> · The intelligence required to manipulate concepts and arrange them into meaningful patterns.	Learning a computer language, working on logic puzzles, trying to identify scientific principles around us.
<b>Linguistic Intelligence</b> · The intelligence that gives sensitivity to language; an ability to absorb and manipulate it skilfully and to be aware of shades of meaning.	Taking writing class, recording one's own speech into tape-recorder, memorizing passages of poetry.
<b>Musical Intelligence</b> · Refers to our ability to arrange sounds into patterns pleasing to the human ear.	Singing alone, memorizing tunes, listening to music.
<b>Bodily-Kinaesthetic Intelligence</b> · The intelligence needed to perform intricate bodily movements with flexibility and precision. Dancers, athletes, and martial arts practitioners have this.	Practising martial arts, playing sport, learning a craftwork.
<b>Interpersonal Intelligence</b> · This gives us the ability to relate skilfully with others, to be aware of our own and others' feelings.	Meeting new people, working in groups, listening to others.
<b>Intrapersonal Intelligence</b> · This is about becoming truly aware of ourselves and having the ability to constantly purify ourselves in order to access higher levels of joy and power.	Meditation, spending some time daily with oneself, reading biographies of powerful personalities.
<b>Spatial Intelligence</b> · This form of intelligence calls upon our ability to create a mental image of the visual world accurately. Artists, designers, and architects have this intelligence.	Painting, creating designs on the computer, watching films with attention to lighting, camera angles, colour, and other aspects of cinema.

called it 'g', and argued that it contributed to success on a wide range of cognitive tasks. This 'g' is what IQ largely measures.<sup>5</sup> In 1905 the French psychologist Alfred Binet published the first modern intelligence test, the Binet-Simon intelligence scale. In 1912 the abbreviation IQ for intelligence quotient, a translation of the German *Intelligenz-Quotient*, was coined by the German psychologist William Stern. A further refinement of the Binet-Simon scale was published in 1916 by Lewis M Terman, from Stanford University, who supported Stern's proposal that an individual's intelligence level be measured as IQ. Terman's test, which he named the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale, has formed the basis for most modern intelligence tests. In 1939 David Wechsler published the first intelligence test explicitly designed for an adult population, the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale, or WAIS.<sup>6</sup>

The average score obtained by normal people in mental tests at any age is set as the standard for that

particular age. An individual's mental age is calculated by comparing his or her score to that standard. IQ is then calculated by using the following formula:  $IQ = 100 \times MA / CA$ , where MA = mental age and CA = chronological age or biological age. Common tasks that form a part of standard intelligence tests include: choosing the correct synonyms and antonyms, finding the odd word, judging statements as true or false, identifying codes for words, and completing sentences or series.<sup>7</sup>

A surprisingly small region of the brain is responsible for general intelligence. Dr John Duncan and his colleagues of the Medical Research Council in Cambridge asked people to answer an IQ questionnaire while their brains were being scanned with the help of a standard PET (positron emission tomography) to see which brain regions were most active during this task. The team tested 60 people, between 29 and 51 years, on a range of IQ test questions, some testing verbal skills, others spa-

tial thinking. The researchers found that for solving spatial problems people used the lateral prefrontal cortex on both sides of their brain, while for verbal problems they used only the left side.<sup>8</sup> The lateral prefrontal cortex, incidentally, is a region about the diameter of a golf ball on either side of the brain, situated above the outer edge of the eyebrow.

Danah Zohar writes:

The simplistic model of ‘thinking’ as something linear, logical and dispassionate is not wrong—it is just not the full story. It is derived from formal, Aristotelian logic and from arithmetic: ‘If x, then y’, or ‘ $2+2=4$ ’. The brain can do it because of a very distinctive sort of neural wiring known as neural tracts which resemble a series of telephone cables. The axon of one neuron or group of neurons stimulates the dendrites of the next one or group, and an electrochemical signal passes along the chain of linked neurons being employed for any thought or series of thoughts. Each neuron in the series is switched either on or off, and if any part of the chain gets damaged or switched off the whole chain ceases to function. It produces the kind of thinking that is useful for solving rational problems. Serial thinking ability is the kind of mental ability tested for in standard IQ tests. Serial thinking is very similar to the serial processing done by many computers.<sup>9</sup>

Serial neural connections, the basis of our IQ, allow the brain to follow rules, to think logically and rationally, step by step. It is generally thought that IQ being intrinsic to the human brain, one cannot do anything about it. It is not so. There are a number of ways to improve one’s IQ, like writing—a diary, an idea-journal, poetry, notes, stories, and the like—listening to soft music, moderate physical exercise, solving puzzles, and brain games. Interestingly, unnecessary argumentation is detrimental to the flexibility of the mind, the hallmark of intellectual intelligence.<sup>10</sup>

IQ is linear and deterministic—one event should always follow another in the same way. This kind of thinking does not tolerate ambiguity; it is strictly on-off, either-or. Though it is effective within its given set of rules, the logical thinking process breaks

down in changing situations. In *The Mismeasure of Man*, Stephen Jay Gould argued that intelligence tests for measuring IQ were based on faulty assumptions.<sup>11</sup> Many psychologists, including Gardner, believe that traditional measures of intelligence, such as IQ tests, fail to fully explain cognitive ability.



### **Emotional Intelligence**

Often expressed as emotional intelligence quotient or EQ, it refers to the ability, capacity, or skill to perceive, assess, and manage one’s own and others’ emotions, as well as the emotions of groups. Emotional intelligence being a relatively new area of study, its definition is constantly changing.

Typically, emotional intelligence is defined in terms of emotional empathy with, attention to, and discrimination of one’s emotions; accurate recognition of one’s own and others’ moods; mood management or control over emotions; appropriate (adaptive) emotional and behavioural responses to different situations, especially to stress and difficult situations; and balancing of honest expression of emotions against courtesy, consideration, and respect. Additional qualities, though less often mentioned, include selection of work that is emotionally rewarding and a balance between work, personal life, and recreation. Peter Salovey classifies these abilities into five main domains: (i) knowing one’s emotions (self-awareness), (ii) managing emotions, (iii) motivating oneself, (iv) recognizing emotions in others properly, and (v) handling relationships.<sup>12</sup>

The term ‘emotional intelligence’ has been popularized by Daniel Goleman, who has published several books and articles on emotional intelligence and its application to business. However, the term seems to have originated in an article by Keith Beasley.<sup>13</sup>

Unlike IQ, it is difficult to measure EQ quantitatively. The available tests on EQ are fundamentally qualitative. These include: self-report measure, ability-based measure, and the behavioural measure developed at Swinburne University. The Swinburne model, for example, measures seven dimensions of an individual’s emotions: (i) emotional self-awareness, (ii) emotional expression,

## Different Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence<sup>14</sup>

Cognitive neuroscience research suggests that human emotions and social skills depend on a multitude of neural circuits serving many behaviours, including empathy, emotion recognition, emotional sensation, and emotional expression. These neural networks are the basis of EQ—our emotion-driven, pattern-recognizing, habit-building intelligence. Associative thinking underlies most of our purely emotional intelligence—the link between one emotion and another, between emotions and bodily feelings, and between emotions and the environment. The structures within the brain, through which we undertake associative thinking, are organized as neural networks. Unlike the precise wiring of neural tracts, responsible for intellectual intelligence, in neural networks each neuron acts upon, or is acted upon by, many other neurons simultaneously.<sup>16</sup>

Neural networks have also the ability to rewire themselves in dialogue with experience. Like other aspects of associative intelligence, emotions are not immediately verbal. We often have trouble talking about them with any accuracy, and they are certainly not always rational in the sense of obeying rules or predictions. The advantage of associative thinking is its flexibility. On the other hand, this kind of thinking is slowly learnt, inaccurate, and tends to be habit-bound or tradition-bound. And because it is subjective in nature, we have difficulty sharing it with others.<sup>17</sup>

Well developed emotional intelligence gives the ability to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustrations, to control impulses and delay gratification,

(iii) emotional understanding of others, (iv) emotional reasoning, (v) emotional self-management, (vi) emotional management of others, (vii) emotional self-control.<sup>15</sup>

Prabuddha Bharata

tions, to regulate moods, to empathize, and to hope (36). It helps one to perform better in every type of job, including computer programming which is generally considered to be the domain of intellectual intelligence. Any team job requires communication skills as well as the ability to listen to and act on the needs of others. High EQ performers understand the value of collaboration over competition.

The moral is that having a high IQ or being cognitively very bright will show only the door; what makes one successful in a career is one's EQ. And the higher up the management ladder one climbs, the more important EQ becomes. Daniel Goleman says: 'When I compared star performers with average ones in senior leadership positions, nearly 90% of the difference in their profiles was attributable to emotional intelligence factors rather than cognitive abilities.'<sup>18</sup> He observes: 'Men who are high in emotional intelligence are socially poised, outgoing and cheerful, not prone to fearfulness or worried rumination. They have a notable capacity for commitment to people or causes, for taking responsibility, and for having

an ethical outlook; they are sympathetic and caring in their relationships. Their emotional life is rich, but appropriate; they are comfortable with themselves, others, and the social universe they live in.'<sup>19</sup>

The three most important skills for emotional intelligence are those that are foundational to many other skills. Goleman calls these the 'metaskills': emotional self-awareness, empathy, and emotional self-control. One of the best ways to be aware of our emotions is to meditate, which gives us the opportunity to objectify our emotions. This also helps to develop empathy or the feeling of oneness with

others, to put ourselves into others' shoes, to understand others better. Emotional

### Intrapersonal EQ

- Self-regard
- Emotional self-awareness
- Assertiveness
- Independence
- Self-actualization

### Interpersonal EQ

- Empathy
- Social responsibility
- Interpersonal relationships

### Stress management EQ

- Stress tolerance
- Impulse control

### Adaptability EQ

- Reality testing
- Flexibility
- Problem-solving

### General mood EQ

- Optimism
- Happiness

self-control, which essentially means altering undesirable emotions with desirable ones, has been adequately addressed in Patanjali's *Yoga Sutra*. Aphorism 2.33, for example, prescribes countering disturbing thoughts with contrary thoughts. Gerald James Larson points out: 'Samkhya and Yoga, however, focus on the triad of pleasure (*sukha*), frustration (*dubkha*) and emotional confusion (*moha*) (*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*), and the manner in which one can gain control over the important emotions that operate throughout the "mind-stuff" (*chittavritti*) through the practice of Yoga. There are rich resources within these two traditions for addressing the issues of emotional intelligence and various strategies for altering emotional intelligence.'<sup>20</sup>

In his review of research surrounding emotional intelligence, Becker criticized emotional intelligence on two fronts. The first is the lack of valid and reliable measures in the area. Becker argues that since emotional intelligence cannot be measured with reasonable accuracy, it is impossible to know whether it is rooted in reality or imagination. The second criticism stems from the fact that emotional intelligence appears to be based on problematic conceptualization; critics believe that emotional intelligence is nothing more than general intelligence aimed at emotional phenomena.<sup>21</sup>

### **Spiritual Intelligence**

At the end of the last century a collection of scientific data indicated a third intelligence: spiritual intelligence. A larger picture of the human intelligence could be achieved with the inclusion of spiritual intelligence—SQ for short. By SQ is meant the intelligence through which we can address and solve problems of meaning and value, and place our actions and our lives in a wider, richer, and more significant perspective. This is the kind of intelligence that allows us to find more meaningful courses of action. The champions of SQ even go to the extent of saying that this intelligence is the necessary foundation for the effective functioning of both IQ and EQ.

In his book *The Power of Spiritual Intelligence*, Tony Buzan, who coined the term 'spiritual intel-

ligence', describes it as 'awareness of the world and your place in it'. Spiritual intelligence is functionally defined as the ability to behave with compassion and wisdom while maintaining inner and outer peace and equanimity regardless of the circumstances. It is not just feeling good about people. That is relatively easy to accomplish when we are alone in prayer or meditation. SQ is about how we behave—how we actually make decisions and act—in the stressful everyday world of interaction with difficult people and situations. Internal awareness matters, but it must be translated into action. High SQ people behave with wisdom and compassion. Since wisdom is the most elevated stage of the intellect and compassion the most elevated stage of emotion, the behaviour resulting from such a highly developed blend of head and heart creates the ability to interact successfully at both personal and social levels. SQ is also related to the highest stages of human development.

Maintaining inner and outer peace depends on a calm non-attachment to outcomes, while simultaneously acting with passionate conviction. This is only possible for people with a high SQ. Wisdom provides the necessary distance needed to always keep things in perspective, while connection with the transcendent keeps high SQ people from getting emotionally distressed by the natural suffering and unfairness of the world. Strong actions can come from a peaceful state of mind alone. There is no lack of energy in spiritually intelligent people. Instead, there is an increased effectiveness that comes from not activating the limbic system—the seat of our emotions—with the emotion of fear while responding to a stressful situation. The additional benefits of this calm inner state include less stress, higher resilience, and availability of more energy for efficiently coping with any situation. When people appear calm on the outside but churn emotionally within, they become exhausted and burnt out. The ability to maintain inner equanimity in an intense and conflict-filled workplace and world is a real advantage. More decisions, quality decisions, and skilful actions result from this state of being.

It is mainly in its transformative power that SQ

differs from EQ. Emotional intelligence allows us to judge what situation we are in, and then to behave appropriately within that situation. This is working within the boundaries of the situation, allowing it to guide us. But spiritual intelligence allows us to ask if we want to be in a particular situation in the first place. Would we rather change the situation, creating a better one? This is working with the boundaries of the situation, allowing us to guide it.

According to Danah Zohar and Ian Marshall:

The major issue on people's minds today is meaning. Many writers point out that the need for greater meaning is the central crisis of our times. Many people have achieved an unprecedented level of material well-being, yet they feel they want more. Many speak of emptiness. This 'more' that would fill the emptiness seldom has any connection with formal religion. For some people, SQ may find a mode of expression through formal religion, but being religious doesn't guarantee high SQ.<sup>22</sup>

Unlike intellectual intelligence, which is linear, logical, and rational, spiritual intelligence cannot be quantified. The questions involved in SQ tests are simply an exercise in reflection. The subjects have to check for various signs that mark their spiritual intelligence.

The indications of a highly developed SQ include: (i) the capacity to be flexible, actively and spontaneously adaptive; (ii) a high degree of self-awareness; (iii) a capacity to face and use suffering; (iv) a capacity to face and transcend pain; (v) the quality of being inspired by vision and values; (vi) a reluctance to cause unnecessary harm; (vii) a tendency to see the connections between diverse things (being 'holistic'); (viii) a marked tendency to ask 'why?' or 'what if?' questions and to seek 'fundamental' answers; (ix) being what psychologists call 'field-independent'—possessing a capacity for working against convention; (x) being someone who is responsible for bringing higher vision and value to others, in other words, a person who inspires others (servant leader) (15–16).

In the early 1990s research was carried out by neuropsychologist Michael Persinger, and in 1997

by neurologist V S Ramachandran and his team at the University of California, on the possible existence of a 'God-spot' in the human brain. This built-in spiritual centre is reported to be located among neural connections in the temporal lobes of the brain. These areas light up on PET scans whenever research subjects are exposed to discussion of spiritual or religious topics. The stimulating themes vary with cultures—Westerners responding to mention of 'God', Buddhists and others responding to symbols meaningful to them. Such temporal lobe activity has also been linked to mystical visions. Ramachandran's work is the first to show that this centre is active in normal people too. The 'God-spot' does not prove the existence of God, but it does show that the brain has evolved enough to ask 'ultimate questions', to have and use a sensitivity to wider meaning and value. These researchers concluded that there may be dedicated neural machinery in the temporal lobes of quite normal people concerned with religion. The phenomenon of religious belief may be 'hard-wired' into the brain.<sup>23</sup>

The work on 'the binding problem' by Austrian neurologist Wolf Singer, in the 1990s, shows that there is a neural process in the brain devoted to unifying and giving meaning to our experience—a neural process that literally 'binds' our experiences together. Before Singer's work on unifying synchronous neural oscillations across the whole brain, neurologists and cognitive scientists only recognized two forms of brain neural organization—serial neural connections and associative neural connections. Computers with serial and parallel processors are able to execute the two kinds of functions performed by these two types of neural connections. But they cannot operate with 'meaning' and ask questions like 'why?' Singer's work on unifying neural oscillations offers the first hint of a third kind of thinking, harmonious thinking, and an accompanying third mode of intelligence, SQ, that can deal with such questions.<sup>24</sup>

Harvard neurologist and biological anthropologist Terrance Deacon's neurobiological work on language and symbolic representation—*The Symbolic*

*Species*, 1997—demonstrates that we have used SQ literally to grow our human brains. SQ has ‘wired’ us to become the people we are and gives us the potential for further ‘rewiring’—for growth and transformation, for further evolution of our human potential (13). We use SQ to be creative, to solve our existential problems—problems that make us feel personally stuck, trapped by our own past habits or neuroses or illness or grief—to become more spiritually intelligent about religion, to transcend the gap between self and other. Spiritual intelligence is ‘our compass at the edge’.

After all these discussions it is natural to ask: ‘Can we improve our spiritual intelligence?’ Zohar advocates seven practical steps to improve our SQ:

- Step 1: Becoming aware of one’s own position
- Step 2: Feeling strongly the need of inner change
- Step 3: Reflecting on one’s own centre and deepest motivations
- Step 4: Discovering and dissolving obstacles
- Step 5: Exploring many possibilities to go forward
- Step 6: Committing to a path
- Step 7: Remaining aware that there are many paths (263–5)

The three basic varieties of intelligence work together, supporting each other. Our brains are designed to allow this. Each of these intelligence types has its own area of strength and can function independently. Therefore, we need not necessarily be high or low in all the three simultaneously. But since spiritual intelligence operates from the brain’s unifying neurological functions, it has the capacity to integrate all our intelligence mechanisms.

The concept of human intelligence can no more be restricted to the age-old IQ. Constantly changing notions about intelligence necessitate a shift of paradigm. This involves replacing an old way of thinking with a radically different one. The false notion of equating intelligence with IQ is undergoing a change to include EQ and SQ, thus completing the all-inclusive picture of human intelligence. This is a major paradigm shift in the field of human intelligence.

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# **Plato's Allegory of the Cave: A Vedantic Reading**

**Dr Pramila Davidson**

'ENLIGHTENMENT' is a constant theme in Eastern sacred literature. There are countless texts dealing with the 'inner journey' from ignorance to self-realization or from 'self' to 'Self'. This theme is not very common in the Western religious tradition, perhaps because of the latter's dualistic approach. Western thought and its science are largely inductive and empirical. They look for truth that is verifiable. Every statement of fact must be quantifiable, replicable, and open to rigorous testing. This implies a focus on a world experienced through the five senses. As we shall see, for Plato the phenomenal world of ordinary experience is a prison of ignorance. His work is based on the teachings of Socrates and the doctrines of Pythagoras.

## **Plato: The Republic**

*The Republic* is a philosophic and political text or 'dialogue'. The word 'republic' has roots in two Latin terms: *res* and *publica*, meaning a state devoted to the welfare of the public. It relates to the nature of the ideal and just state. Plato postulates the concept of a 'guardian' or 'philosopher king' to head such a state. Kings like Janaka and Ashoka in ancient India, and Mahatma Gandhi in modern times, would fit Plato's conception. The *Republic* has been criticized by intellectuals such as Bertrand Russell for being a 'totalitarian tract'.<sup>1</sup> I think Russell has been harsh on Plato. Perhaps the problem lies in the fact that Plato takes what to me seems a spiritual—in the Advaita Vedanta sense—metaphor and applies it to the politics of his ideal but secular state. In India we are accustomed to thinking that 'as Mount Meru is to a grain of sand, so is a sannyasin to a householder'. Ordinary people are simply not capable of achiev-

ing the kind of blazing renunciation that is the warp and woof of a monk's existence. Plato expects his guardians to be full of a wisdom that transcends the greed for material things. They must work for the common good without any claim to wealth, property, name, fame, or status.

Central to the *Republic* is chapter seven. It starts out by showing the difference between 'enlightened' and 'unenlightened' natures through the allegory of the cave. This is probably one of the most famous and profound philosophic discourses in Western philosophy. The idea it conveys is commonplace in India as well.

The *Republic* is an enquiry into the nature of justice. Plato was devastated by the unjust trial and death of his teacher Socrates. It appears that Socrates was judged by lesser men who did not understand his teachings. He was tried at Athens on the charge of corrupting the youth by his teachings and sentenced to death by drinking hemlock. Legend has it that Socrates was a man of gigantic intellect and an extraordinarily austere character. He is supposed to have worn the simplest clothes, walked around barefoot, and borne great domestic misery with silent fortitude. There is no known direct written record of his ideas but for Plato's works, which are considered to be a testimony to his teacher's greatness. The *Republic* aims at drawing up a blueprint of a state in which men like Socrates would be kings, not criminals.

As was stated earlier, the *Republic* is written as a dialogue—following the maieutic method of instructing and inquiring into issues through a series of significant questions—between Socrates and others. Socrates pretends ignorance in order to lead

others into a display of supposed knowledge. Plato's aim is to bring out the characteristics of a state governed by 'philosopher kings' and based on principles of the highest truth. The use of dialogues to generate an understanding of difficult philosophic insights was common in India as well. We have Sri Krishna instructing Arjuna in the Bhagavadgita and Yama answering Nachiketa's questions in the *Katha Upanishad*, to give two examples.

### **The Allegory of the Cave**

In the interest of clarity and ready reference I would like to reproduce here the beginning of Chapter VII of the *Republic*.

And now, I said, let me show in a figure how far our nature is enlightened or unenlightened: Behold! human beings living in an underground den, which has a mouth open towards the light and reaching all along the den; here they have been from their childhood, and have their legs and necks chained so that they cannot move, and can only see before them, being prevented by the chains from turning round their heads. Above and behind them a fire is blazing at a distance, and between the fire and the prisoners there is a raised way; and you will see, if you look, a low wall built along the way, like the screen which marionette players have in front of them, over which they show the puppets.

I see.

And do you see, I said, men passing along the wall carrying all sorts of vessels, and statues and figures of animals made of wood and stone and various materials, which appear over the wall? Some of them are talking, others silent.

You have shown me a strange image, and they are strange prisoners.

Like ourselves, I replied; and they see only their own shadows, or the shadows of one another, which the fire throws on the opposite wall of the cave.

True, he said; how could they see anything but the shadows if they were never allowed to move their heads?

And of the objects which are being carried in like manner they would only see the shadows?

Yes, he said.

And if they were able to converse with one another, would they not suppose that they were nam-

ing what was actually before them?

Very true.

And suppose further that the prison had an echo which came from the other side, would they not be sure to fancy when one of the passers-by spoke that the voice which they heard came from the passing shadow?

No question, he replied.

To them, I said, the truth would be literally nothing but the shadows of the images.

That is certain.

And now look again, and see what will naturally follow if the prisoners are released and disabused of their error. At first, when any of them is liberated and compelled suddenly to stand up and turn his neck round and walk and look towards the light, he will suffer sharp pains; the glare will distress him, and he will be unable to see the realities of which in his former state he had seen the shadows; and then conceive some one saying to him, that what he saw before was an illusion, but that now, when he is approaching nearer to being and his eye is turned towards more real existence, he has a clearer vision—what will be his reply? And you may further imagine that his instructor is pointing to the objects as they pass and requiring him to name them—will he not be perplexed? Will he not fancy that the shadows which he formerly saw are truer than the objects which are now shown to him?

Far truer.

And if he is compelled to look straight at the light, will he not have a pain in his eyes which will make him turn away to take refuge in the objects of vision which he can see, and which he will conceive to be in reality clearer than the things which are now being shown to him?

True, he said.

And suppose once more, that he is reluctantly dragged up a steep and rugged ascent, and held fast until he is forced into the presence of the sun himself, is he not likely to be pained and irritated? When he approaches the light his eyes will be dazzled, and he will not be able to see anything at all of what are now called realities.

Not all in a moment, he said.

He will require to grow accustomed to the sight of the upper world. And first he will see the shadows best, next the reflections of men and

other objects in the water, and then the objects themselves; then he will gaze upon the light of the moon and the stars and the spangled heaven; and he will see the sky and the stars by night better than the sun or the light of the sun by day?

Certainly.

Last of all he will be able to see the sun, and not mere reflections of him in the water, but he will see him in his own proper place, and not in another; and will contemplate him as he is.

Certainly.

He will then proceed to argue that this is he who gives the season and the years, and is the guardian of all that is in the visible world, and in a certain way the cause of all things which he and his fellows have been accustomed to behold?

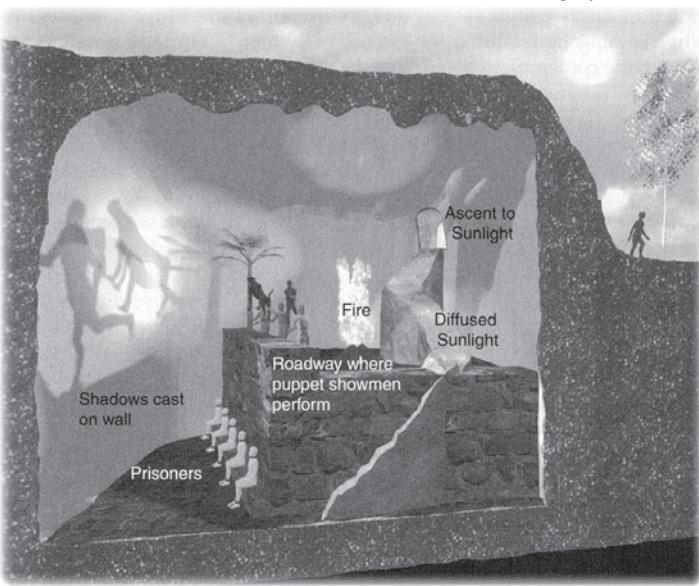
Clearly, he said, he would first see the sun and then reason about him.

And when he remembered his old habitation, and the wisdom of the den and his fellow-prisoners, do you not suppose that he would felicitate himself on the change, and pity them?

Certainly, he would.<sup>2</sup>

The allegory continues, but it is convenient to pause here and look at Plato's own explanation of the images first. The cave or prison, says Plato, is the world as we see it. The fire burning behind the prisoners is the sun. The journey upwards out of the cave is the 'ascent of the soul into the intellectual world' (*ibid.*). Further, the 'idea' of the 'good' appears at last to the jnani and he reaches it with great effort. It is the source of all light, of truth and reason. Any rational individual must always focus on the good

#### *Sketch of the allegory of the cave*



in all his dealings, because it is the highest truth and the highest beauty—Satya! Shiva! Sundara!

Bertrand Russell uses a simple but effective analogy to explain what Plato means by his conception of the 'idea', the 'good' as true reality. For everything we see around us there is a perfect idea or ideal. There is a heavenly cat on which all the cats in the world are modelled. The earthly cat is an imperfect copy of the heavenly cat which is perfect and 'real'. An earthly cat can see its own image in water. It can be painted. The painting of the cat is a copy of a copy.<sup>3</sup> The central conception of Plato's philosophy is the existence of a world of ideas, of divine types, the abstract 'forms' of concrete material objects. These ideas alone are real and permanent. Individual material things are ephemeral and imperfect imitations of ideas.

The prisoners in the cave see the shadows of people passing on the raised way and hear echoes of their conversation. They also see the shadows of the objects that these people are carrying such as vessels, wooden images, and other objects, but they are not able to distinguish between animate and inanimate objects or between human beings and animals—they are ignorant, in the sense that they consider the existential world to be true and real. To quote Swami Vivekananda:

With every breath, with every pulsation of the heart, with every one of our movements, we think we are free, and the very same moment we are shown that we are not. Bound slaves, nature's bond-slaves, in body, in mind, in all our thoughts, in all our feelings. And this is Maya.<sup>4</sup>

That we are all miserable, that this world is really a prison, that even our so-called trailing beauty is but a prison-house and that even our intellects and minds are prison-houses, have been known for ages upon ages (2.122).

This world is nothing. It is at best only a hideous caricature, a shadow of the Reality (2.174).

According to Swamiji, the life of the senses is little better than the life of a brute. The attempt for most thinking people is to go beyond the limitations of nature, and in many religions this is ac-

complished by worshipping someone who is not bound by nature or maya. There is an intense struggle between the animal man and the spiritual man, until he finally cuts his way out to freedom. Thus we have the seer of truth and seekers of truth stumbling through internal roadblocks until they see 'not as through a glass darkly' but 'face to face'. The mirror of the mind must be polished so that the Truth, the one Reality can be experienced: 'The Atman in all beings does not manifest Himself to the eyes or the senses, but those whose minds have become purified and refined realize Him. Beyond all sound, all sight, beyond form, absolute, beyond all taste and touch, infinite, without beginning and without end, even beyond nature, the Unchangeable; he who realizes Him, frees himself from the jaws of death' (2.169–70).

### A Vedantic Reading

What struck me as odd when I first read the *Republic*, and strikes me as anomalous even after many readings over the years, is the feeling of *déjà vu*, of easy familiarity. The line of argument is consistent with the Upanishads and other sacred Indian literature. We are all victims of the darkness of 'tamas'. As Swamiji says, our sense of freedom is an illusion. We are bound by the shackles of sense perception and we mistake shadows for reality. And this, to echo Swamiji, is maya. Plato never uses the term 'maya', but the description of ignorance and delusion that he gives is similar in meaning.

In *Jnana Yoga*, Swamiji explains maya and illusion:

Because we talk in vain, and because we are satisfied with the things of the senses, and because we ... as it were, cover the Reality with a mist ... we get the idea that the cause of our ignorance is a kind of mist that has come between us and the Truth (2.88).

As no man can jump out of his self, so no man can go beyond the limits that have been put upon him by the laws of time and space (2.91).

Time, space and causation are like the glass through which the Absolute is seen, and when

it is seen on the lower side, It appears as the universe (2.130).

We may remember that the prisoners have been in the underground den since birth and as they are chained, they cannot even move their heads, much less go beyond the space limitations of the cave. Interestingly, for Swamiji, everything that comes to us not only through the senses and mind but also through the intellect is limited. For Plato, the intellect, through a process of dialectic and reasoning, can reach Reality. He makes no distinction between secular and sacred knowledge. His ideal state has elements that would not be acceptable to the jnani—such as the emphasis on the art of war—but in terms of the transition from 'becoming' to 'being' his ideas echo ancient Indian thought. Volumes have been written about the concepts of 'nothingness', 'becoming', and 'being' from Hegel to Sartre. For the present, we could simply consider it as 'realizing one's full potential'.

To quote Swamiji again: 'Man feels, consciously or unconsciously, that he is bound; he is not what he wants to be. It was taught to him the very moment he began to look around. That very instant he learnt that he was bound, and he also found that there was something in him which wanted to fly beyond, where the body could not follow, but which was yet chained down by this limitation' (2.103).

The journey out of the limitation of the cave is a path that leads a prisoner from nothingness to 'being'. Initially, it is difficult for him to accept that the world of shadows, of sight, is relative and therefore not real. He finds it difficult to accept a reality which transcends sense perception. Empirical thought rejects any fact that cannot be seen and verified. So long as the prisoners are in the cave, the true reality for them can only be the shadows they see and the echoes they hear. The transition from the darkness of the cave to the blazing light of the sun is through a twilight zone. Swamiji explains a portion of the ancient Upanishads: 'There is another heaven called the Gandharva, in which ... as a man sees his own reflection in the water, so is the Reality seen there. The highest heaven, of which the Hindus conceive is

called the Brahmaloka; and in this the Truth is seen ... like light and shade. ... But as a man sees his own face in a mirror, perfect, distinct, and clear, so is the Truth shining in the soul of man' (2.184).

The Eastern tradition admits that for seekers of truth the journey is as difficult as walking on a razor's edge, and only a few succeed; but in due course all of us will achieve it, because it is our birthright. The only way out is by cutting through the web of maya. As usual, Swamiji resolves the confusion caused by our imperfect understanding of the issue:

I cannot say that this chain exists, when I think that I do not know it. It may be an entire delusion of my brain. I may be dreaming all the time ... No one can prove that it is not a dream. My brain itself may be a dream, and as to that no one has ever seen his own brain. We all take it for granted. ...

At the same time I cannot say, I do not know. This standing between knowledge and ignorance, this mystic twilight, the mingling of truth and falsehood—and where they meet—no one knows. We are walking in the midst of a dream, half sleeping, half waking, passing all our lives in a haze ... *This is the fate of all sense knowledge* [emphasis added].

This eternal play of light and darkness—indiscriminate, indistinguishable, and inseparable—is always there. A fact, yet at the same time not a fact ... and this is what is called Maya. We are born in Maya, we live in it, we think in it, we dream in it. ... This is the work of Nāma-Rupa—name and form. Everything that has form, everything that calls up an idea in your mind, is within Maya; for everything that is bound by the laws of time, space, and causation is within Maya (2.111–12).

Here, for me, is the allegory of the cave explained for what it is: the journey through insentience, ignorance, or maya to the 'one light and knowledge'.

### **Philosopher Kings**

Plato divides ordinary people into three categories: lovers of wisdom, lovers of honour, and lovers of gain. Could these three categories be related to the brahmanas, kshatriyas, and vaishyas respectively? It may be mentioned here that Greek city states had a

slave population which far outnumbered their citizens. Would this correspond to the fourth varna in Hinduism, the shudras?

It is not enough for the 'lovers of wisdom or learning', the philosophers, to attain enlightenment. Plato sends them back to the dungeon to impart their wisdom to prisoners grovelling in darkness, regardless of how unwilling these philosophers are to re-enter 'the evil state of man'. I cannot help remembering an incident from the life of Sri Sarada Devi. Yogan Ma recounts that Sri Sarada Devi went into samadhi while meditating and remarked later: 'When I regained a little body-consciousness, I noticed my body lying nearby. Then I began to wonder, "How can I enter into that hideous corpse?" I didn't feel the least inclined to get into it once again. After a long while I persuaded myself to enter into it, and I regained my body-consciousness.'<sup>5</sup>

When the enlightened first go back to the cave, it is as difficult for them to get used to the darkness as it was earlier to attune their eyes to light. The transition from light to darkness is almost as painful as the transition from darkness to light. They would then become a butt of ridicule for the prisoners. At this point Plato makes a significant statement:

Certain professors of education must be wrong when they say that they can put a knowledge into the soul which was not there before, like sight into blind eyes. ... Whereas ... the power and capacity of learning exists in the soul already; and that just as the eye was unable to turn from darkness to light without the whole body, so too the instrument of knowledge can only by the movement of the whole soul be turned from the world of becoming into that of being, and learn by degrees to endure the sight of being, and of the brightest and best of being, or in other words, of the good. ... The faculty of sight ... exists already, but has been turned in the wrong direction, and is looking away from the truth.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, wisdom is inherent in the human being because it is a divine quality which never leaves him. This inherent divinity is either rendered 'useful and profitable or ... hurtful and useless', in Plato's lan-

guage. Physical pleasures such as eating and drinking drag a person down. If his faculties are tuned in the opposite direction, he sees the truth as intensely as he sees the phenomenal world! Swamiji says repeatedly: 'Get up and manifest the divinity that is already in you,' give up this making and breaking of mud pies. You are perfect already; learn to manifest it. Again: 'Immortal man, dreaming mortal dreams!' The difference between Plato and Indian thought seems to be that the latter considers mukti, liberation, the birthright of every human being; for Plato, very few achieve it.

Those who have achieved the 'good' in Plato's republic would not be allowed to stay in the 'upper world'. They would be forced to become guardians or ministers of state for the welfare of the general public. They may view this as unjust and repugnant, but the aim of the state is the greater good, the welfare of the state as a whole, and the guardians must sacrifice themselves to serve it. Here Plato gives the meaning of the word 'republic' as *res plus publica*, the welfare of the state. He feels that young people who show the right character and qualities must go through rigorous training to become future guardians. He goes on to mention that the state ought to nurture and educate them to be kings of the hive, to rule in virtue and wisdom, not for wealth. Since the guardians have no taste for governance, they would be the wisest rulers. Thus, the state as a whole prospers and its citizens achieve the best they are capable of: 'The release of the prisoners from chains, and their translation from the shadows to the images and to the light, and the ascent from the underground den to the sun ... this power of elevating the highest principle in the soul to the contemplation of that which is best in existence, with which we may compare the raising of that faculty which is the very light of the body to the sight of that which is brightest in the material and visible world' (194).

The dialectic proceeds through 'study and pursuit of the arts' so that we perceive not just an image but the absolute Truth. It leads to knowledge of true existence and the true nature of each material thing. 'The eye of the soul, which is literally buried

in an outlandish slough, is ... lifted upwards' (195). The reference to the eye of the soul is in some ways reminiscent of Shiva's third eye, though of course that has a much deeper and broader connotation.

The discourse finally attains a 'conception of the essence of each thing'. This whole exercise of drawing up a blueprint for the ideal state and for the nurturing and training of philosopher kings is not a 'dream': 'When the true philosopher kings are born in a State, one or more of them, despising the honours of this present world which they deem mean and worthless, esteeming above all things right and the honour that springs from right, and regarding justice as the greatest and most necessary of all things, whose ministers they are, and whose principles will be exalted by them when they set in order their own city' (202).

There are too many echoes, too many similarities and parallels between Plato's allegory of the cave and Indian thought. I have quoted extensively from Swami Vivekananda. Apart from the depth and sweep of his insight, the point of course is that he relied extensively on the Upanishads and other scriptures, which definitely pre-date Plato. And the voice of the Upanishads reverberate eternally: 'I shall tell you in half a couplet that which has been stated in millions of Vedanta books: Brahman alone is real, and the world illusory; man is none other than Brahman.'<sup>7</sup>



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# **Spiritual Substance and Perfection in Indian Thought**

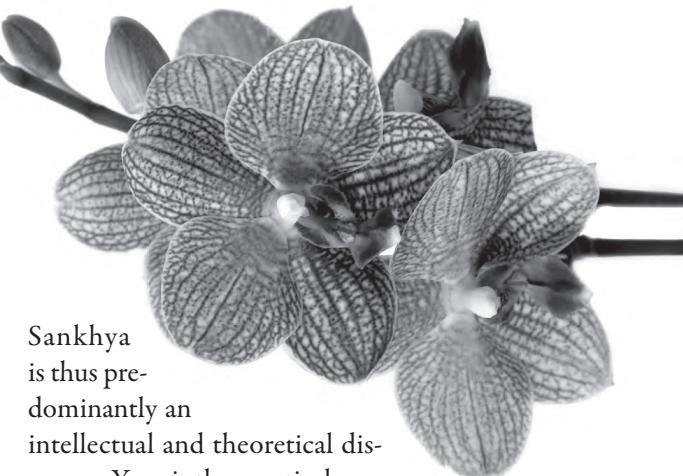
**Rajeshri Trivedi**

INDIAN thought has long been a treasure house of ideas that deal with the deeper metaphysical as well as socio-moral aspects of human life. These ideas have developed gradually over a period of time through different philosophical systems. These systems, in turn, are broadly classified into two: (i) the orthodox or *āstika darśana*, which accepts Vedic authority, and (ii) the heterodox or *nāstika darśana*, which repudiates this authority. Philosophy in India has always been termed *darśana*, meaning 'vision (of truth)'. Each *darśana*, or philosophical system, is largely an attempt to take the aspirant from the level of the mundane to the higher reaches of perfection. Each school believes, in its own way, that *tattva darśana*, the direct realization of truth, leads to perfection. To elucidate this idea we may take a brief look at the way the chief philosophical schools of India conceive of the self and of spiritual perfection.

The six main philosophical traditions, the *sad-darśana*—Sankhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Mimamsa, and Vedanta—belong to the orthodox class. The Charvaka, Jain, and Buddhist philosophies are the three main heterodox systems.

## **Sankhya**

This is the oldest school of Indian philosophy. The word *sāṅkhya* is derived from *sāṅkhyā*, which denotes 'number' as well as 'right knowledge'. The twenty-four material categories, with the conscious Purusha being the twenty-fifth, represent the numerical aspect of Sankhya, while the true understanding of their import constitutes liberating knowledge.



Sankhya is thus predominantly an intellectual and theoretical discourse. Yoga is the practical counterpart of Sankhya. It shows how the theoretical and metaphysical teachings of the Sankhya system can actually be realized. Together, Sankhya and Yoga form a complete twin-system.

Sankhya is dualistic because it maintains that the universe is comprised of two ultimate realities: Purusha, the spiritual principle, and Prakriti, the principle of matter. This system does not accept the concept of a creator God; it intends to explain the process of evolution in purely rationalistic terms. It conceives of evolution as a result of the coming together of Prakriti and Purusha. The purpose of the evolution of Prakriti is twofold: securing enjoyment as well as liberation for the Purusha. Purusha is the soul, self, spirit, subject, or knower. Though Prakriti is dynamic, it is unintelligent and cannot evolve without the association of Purusha, which is pure intelligence and consciousness. Thus, evolution is the result of the coming together of two opposite principles. As Prakriti cannot evolve without the conscious intelligent guidance of Purusha, it is viewed as being totally dependent upon the latter. This idea clearly underlines the supremacy of Purusha, that is, the supremacy of the spiritual principle over matter.

Liberation, or freedom from earthly existence,

which is full of pain, is the *summum bonum* of life, the highest end. The Sankhya-yogins point out that even the so-called pleasures of life lead to pain. The dawn of true knowledge signals *kaivalya*, liberation, and is the necessary condition for cessation of all earthly pain.

Therefore, the Sankhya system neither posits God as the highest reality nor God-realization as the goal of life, but it does believe in the self and its liberation as the ultimate ideal of human life.

### ***Yoga***

Yoga delineates the spiritual path leading to *kaivalya* through the purification of mind and body. The word 'yoga' ordinarily means 'union'—the spiritual union of the individual soul with the universal soul. This is the sense in which it is used in Vedanta. But in Patanjali's system of yoga it is used to denote *samadhi*, meditative concentration.

The Bhagavadgita has defined 'yoga' as that state 'obtaining which one does not think of any other acquisition as being higher or more worthy of realization, and being firmly rooted in which one is not shaken even by the greatest sorrow'. Yoga is the state beyond all misery and pain. Patanjali gives a somewhat different meaning of yoga. To him it means spiritual effort to attain perfection through the control of the body, senses, and mind, and right discrimination between Purusha and Prakriti.

The Yoga philosophy advocates the need for a healthy mind in a healthy body. For this reason, purification of mind and body are necessary prerequisites for perfection. It preaches not emaciation but perfection of the body. A sound mind needs a sound body. Therefore passions, which have a disturbing effect on body and mind, must be mastered through the path of *astāṅga yoga*. This is the eight-fold path of spiritual discipline, which teaches the control of body and mind in five steps—*yama*, *niyama*, *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, *pratyāhāra*—and then the focussing of the controlled mind through a further three advanced steps: *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna*, and *samādhi*.

Though this system accepts the reality of God, his importance lies mainly in being an object of meditation. He is not the being that creates, sustains, or destroys the universe. He is not the moral governor of the universe, nor does he grant liberation. Nevertheless, Yoga is a path specifically oriented to spiritual perfection.

### ***Nyaya-Vaisheshika***

The Nyaya and Vaisheshika are allied systems that are both realistic and pluralistic. Nyaya is known for its logic and epistemology and Vaisheshika for its atomistic metaphysics. Though these systems accept God, they do not regard him as the creator of this universe. God is an eternal substance, coequal with innumerable atoms and innumerable individual souls which limit him and distort his glory and greatness. As Chandradhar Sharma points out, in the Nyaya-Vaisheshika system God has been reduced to the status of a supervisor, the first mover in the process of Creation. The actual process of Creation unfolds in keeping with the law of karma or *adr̥sta*, the unseen effects of actions. Liberated souls do not merge in God nor do they commune with him. They do not share his knowledge and bliss. God is also not the moral governor of this world; he does not reward or punish human actions. Hence bhakti, devotion, has no place in this system. There is no internal relation between God, the human souls, and the world. All relations are external.

The Nyaya-Vaisheshika concept of self also has some distinctive features. This system maintains the plurality of souls—as many souls as there are bodies—much like the Sankhyas. But consciousness, according to the Nyaya-Vaisheshikas, is only an accidental property and not the essence of the soul. It arises in the soul only in a knowledge situation, when the soul comes in contact with an external object of knowledge through the senses and mind. Further, in the state of moksha, liberation, the soul is freed from all attributes. This is a negative concept, for if the soul is a substance, absence of attributes reduces it to 'a mere nothing'.

Instead of treating the soul as the subject, the fundamental backdrop of all knowledge and experience, the Nyaya-Vaisheshika system grants it the status of an object. This robs the soul of the uniqueness—of being a subject, pure consciousness in essence—that some of the other schools see in it. Even the Nyaya-Vaisheshika concept of liberation is petrifying to most people.

Despite these shortcomings, one has to acknowledge that the idea of liberation from samsara through right knowledge is very much a part of this system. That bondage is due to ignorance and liberation the result of right knowledge is a common idea among the Indian philosophical systems that accept the concept of the soul and its liberation.

### **Mimamsa**

This tradition also accepts the concept of self as a spiritual substance and its liberation as the goal of human life. But the elucidation of these concepts has not been very satisfactory. Both Kumarila and Prabhakara, the major exponents of this school, struggle to formulate a satisfactory view of the self, though they are unanimous in maintaining that consciousness is not the essence of the self. The self is the substratum of consciousness, a real knower and agent, characterized by plurality, eternality, and omnipresence. It is different from the body, senses, mind, and intellect. It is the enjoyer, while both internal feelings and external things are objects of enjoyment.

The earlier Mimamsakas had regarded the attainment of heaven as the ideal of human life. But later Mimamsakas believed in moksha and substituted the ideal of heaven with that of liberation. The ideal of liberation, however, is conceived of negatively, much like the Nyaya-Vaisheshika formulation. The bondage of the self in samsara is due to its association with the body, senses, mind, and intellect. It is through this association that the soul becomes an active agent in samsara—a knower and an enjoyer. This association is attributed to karma, which is therefore the cause of bondage. When

the cause is removed, the effect ceases to exist. Liberation is attained by ‘disinterested performance of obligatory duties, as enjoined by the Vedas, and the knowledge of the self’. The self is then restored to its original nature: a substance free from all qualities and modes, including consciousness and bliss. It is a negative state, free from all desires and pains as well as from consciousness, though some later Mimamsakas suggested that liberation ‘is an experience of joy’.

### **Vedanta**

Coming to the last of the *sad-darśana*—Uttara Mimamsa or Vedanta—it can be reasonably asserted that the concept of spiritual substance, Atman, and that of liberation reach their culmination here. The Vedanta philosophy of monistic idealism or idealistic monism describes the self as one, eternal, self-luminous, pure consciousness in essence. It transcends all plurality, including such intellectual categories as space, time, qualities, and relations. It is the fundamental ground of all objects and experiences. The self can never be denied, for all doubts, denials, and activities presuppose the self. It is an uncreated self-evident entity, beyond all relativity. Further, this self is essentially one with the ultimate Reality, Brahman. Brahman is cosmic consciousness, and the individual self is its manifestation as subject. To know the self is to know Brahman: *ātmajñāna* is *brahmajñāna*.

By emphasizing the unity of the individual self with the universal Self, Vedanta proclaims the self to be the repository of immense potentialities. Humans are potentially divine, and when this realization dawns and becomes part of one’s life, one rises to unimaginable moral and spiritual heights. The bondage of samsara is due to ignorance of the true nature of both samsara and the ultimate Reality. Humans can be delivered from this bondage by the experience of the essential unity of Atman and Brahman. By announcing the essential divinity of human beings and also showing the way to realizing this divinity, Vedanta has raised the human being above animal existence.

Equally remarkable is the concept of liberation in Vedanta. In Vedanta, moksha is not a negative concept, but a positive state. It is true that liberation from samsara is the end of all earthly pain, but the end coincides with the emergence of unobstructed bliss. This bliss is different from earthly happiness. It is a transcendental bliss beyond all difference and duality. Worldly happiness is fraught with such dualities as pleasure and pain, but pure transcendental bliss is unalloyed.

More important, this condition of bliss can be achieved by the aspirant here and now, while still living in this world. When the realization that this world is maya—and therefore *mithyā*, devoid of an ultimate meaning—and that Brahman alone is real is fully integrated with one's practical conduct, then the person achieves liberation here and now. This is *jīvanmukti*, freedom while living. A *jīvanmukta* continues to live till the momentum of his past actions remains in operation, performing actions without any sense of obligation, dedicating one's actions and their fruits either to God or to the welfare of society. Being selfless, the *jīvanmukta* has no desires to be fulfilled. The process of liberation culminates in the death of the body, and the liberated soul does not come back to this world in any bodily form, as the association of the self with the body and mind is permanently severed. This is *videhamukti*.

This brief account underscores the importance accorded to the conception of spiritual substance and liberation in each of the orthodox Indian philosophical systems. Even though some of these systems may not have been able to elucidate a very satisfactory view of the self and its liberation, due to difficulties inherent in their basic tenets, they have nevertheless grappled hard with these formulations.

Of the heterodox systems, it is perhaps the Charvakas—the school of materialists—alone, that neither accepts Vedic authority nor the reality of God, of the self as an entity separate from the body, or of liberation. It accords reality only to matter. Also, it believes that our present life is the

only life we have. There is no hereafter, and death involves total annihilation of the human personality. The other heterodox schools—that of Jainism and Buddhism—also do not accept the concept of God or the authority of the Vedas. But they view the yogic path of spiritual discipline as one that leads to liberation.



(Continued from page 460)

Again, it cannot be said that, inasmuch as it has parts, consciousness is a compound and must share the fate of all compound entities: destruction. That holds good in the case of material things only. It cannot be predicated of consciousness. Do we not see every moment of our lives that the many thoughts, feelings, and urges bobbing up and down in our mind are nothing but consciousness? But do any of them die, or get destroyed? They abide even when all discrete material things vanish into their source—the so-called ultimate homogeneous force or energy. We have used the word 'part' in the context of consciousness, but the connotation is not the same as in relation to a material thing. Matter can be cut or torn, not so consciousness. Leaving aside the basic consciousness, the active or willing-consciousness remains the same unruffled unmoving consciousness, in spite of its innumerable modes and manners; it neither increases nor decreases, and yet produces a bewildering multitude of ideas and emotions, all the while retaining its command over them—even as the earth remains but earth though the shapes and sizes of earthenware appear, change, and vanish.

To kill or destroy requires two. Consciousness is singular, infinite in all respects, within and beyond time and space. Who can destroy it or make it change in a manner other than its own? Abiding peace is attained only when this thoroughly reasoned posture of the identity of 'feeling-consciousness' and 'willing-consciousness' has become a permanent experience in life under all circumstances. And this is the goal of life as well as the *paramarthika satya*, ultimate Truth.



# **The Spiritual and Cultural Ethos of Modern Hindi Literature**

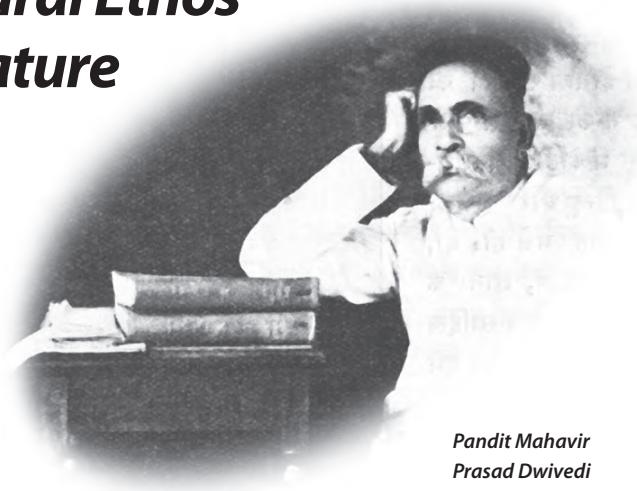
**Prof. Awadhesh Pradhan**

(Continued from the previous issue)

## **The Dwivedi Era**

PANDIT Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi, the editor of the monthly *Saraswati*, provided leadership to Hindi literature in the first two decades of the twentieth century. This literature was established on a reasonably stable foundation during the 'Dwivedi era'. Institutions like the Nagari Pracharini Sabha (est. 1893) and Hindi Sahitya Sammelan (est. 1910) made organized efforts to develop Hindi language and literature. Many periodicals of repute published thoughtful writings on different aspects of science and technology. The Nagari Pracharini Sabha published the works of Swami Vivekananda in the book series named after Suryakumari Devi, the daughter of Raja Ajit Singh of Khetri, who was a close friend and disciple of Swami Vivekananda. In January 1902 the reputed patriot Madhav Prasad Mishra published a biography of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa in his monthly magazine *Sudarshan*. This heralded the advent of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda thought in Hindi. The *Paramahamsa Charit*, another biography of Sri Ramakrishna in Hindi written by one of his monastic disciples, Swami Vijnanananda of Allahabad, was published in 1904. In the March 2009 number of *Vivek Jyoti* Swami Videhatmananda reports that in the beginning of 1898 a collection of thirty-eight parables of Sri Ramakrishna was published from the Indian Press, Allahabad, by Pandit Jwala Dutt Joshi, a pleader attached to the Allahabad High Court.

Intellectualism dominated the writings of this period. Periodicals were full of discussions on the theories of Herbert Spencer and Darwin, of biology and physics. Through essays on the heliocentric theory of Aryabhata and the theory of gravitation



*Pandit Mahavir  
Prasad Dwivedi*

of Bhaskaracharya, the glory of ancient Indian science was brought home. The philosophical discussions initiated by Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi through his writings about God, the individual soul, and knowledge found its culmination in the works of Ramavatar Sharma.

Ramavatar Sharma, who was an eminent Sanskrit scholar and knowledgeable also in many Indian and foreign languages, wrote *Paramarth Darshan* (Philosophy of the Ultimate Truth) in a traditional style. This work was celebrated as the 'seventh philosophy of the Indian tradition'. His thought shows leanings towards modern science and rationality and is free from religious and cultural preconceptions. He asserted that religious development was 'the root of all developments', but cautioned that 'religious development is never possible through a superstitious mind. ... We should give up external rituals that cannot be justified by reason and cherish growth through true devotion. Such devotion is difficult to achieve. It is not dependent on somebody's grace but is based on self-effort.' He was a non-dualist, but his non-dualism is in a class by itself. He believed that non-dual knowledge promotes the feeling of divine immanence. According to him, Ishvara and Prakriti are identical. They have innumerable forms and are all-

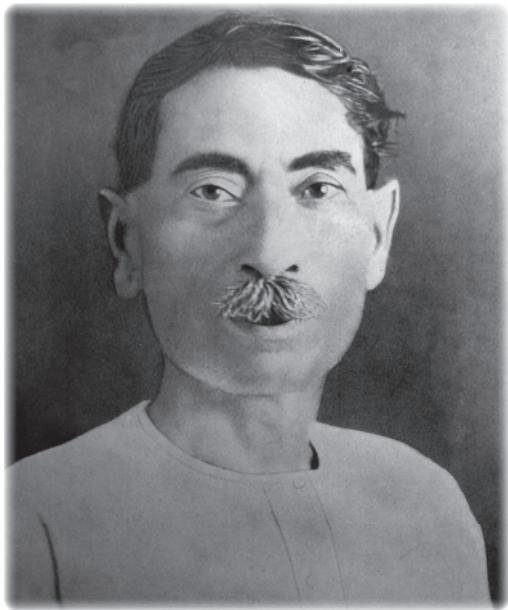
encompassing. Ishvara is related to various objects in the same manner as the body to its organs. He was of the opinion that the world is without beginning or end. The individual soul does not survive the death of the body; only the cosmic soul is indestructible. Defining religion he says: ‘The knowledge of difference in the indivisible, and consequent unbiased behaviour with all, and truthfulness are the basics of religion.’ He upheld the ten characteristics of dharma—fortitude, forgiveness, and the like—as propounded by Manu. Providing a unique synthesis of jnana, bhakti, and karma, he wrote: ‘Today we await a philosophy that will suitably include jnana, karma, and bhakti. Jnana will lead to philosophical development. The combination of jnana and karma will lead to scientific development. And with bhakti being nurtured, discipline will be curbed.’ He gave rational explanations for the metaphors found in the Puranas. He did not believe in rebirth, the karma theory, or in the existence of other worlds. He denounced ostentation and hypocrisy and propagated a scientific outlook through his writings on history, linguistics, philosophy, anthropology, astronomy, geography, geology, and other subjects.

This scientific outlook and rationality found expression in the writings of Acharya Ramchandra Shukla too. He translated the *Riddle of the Universe* of the famous agnostic John Haeckel into Hindi, giving it the title *Vishwaprapanch*. But the major contribution of this proponent of rationality and development lay in his re-establishment of the ideal of bhakti and fresh re-elucidation of devotional poetry. The tradition of original philosophical and spiritual thinking in Hindi was carried forward by Sampurnanand through his *Chidvilas* (The Play of Consciousness) and Acharya Narendra Dev through *Bauddh Dharm Darshan* (The Philosophy of the Buddhist Religion). Of course, the philosopher Bhagwan Das, an associate of Annie Besant, had already brought out several books, including *Purusharth* (Human End), *Darshan ka Prayojan* (The Need for Philosophy), and *Sab Dharmon ki Buniyadi Ekta* (The Fundamental Unity of All Re-

ligions). Acharya Vinoba Bhave provided a great impetus to inter-religious harmony through his insightful commentaries on the Gita, the Upanishads, and the ‘Japuji’, and his compilation of the essential teachings of the Vedas, the Quran, and the Bible.

Among the writers of the Dwivedi era, Chandradhar Sharma Guleri represents intellectual acuity and Sardar Puran Singh an imaginative ethos coloured by Vedanta and Sufism. Sardar Puran Singh was deeply influenced by Swami Ramtirth. It is noteworthy that Professor Tirthram Goswami of the Lahore College was influenced by Swami Vivekananda during the latter’s tour of Lahore in 1897, and later became the monk Swami Ramtirth. In his article ‘Acharan ki Sabhyata’ (Civilized Behaviour)—presenting the philosophy of practical Vedanta in his impassioned style—he emphasized work over writing, realization over the scriptures, and practice over preaching. Sardar Puran Singh was enamoured of those very wonderful humane qualities of the working class that Premchand portrayed so vividly in the Indian farmers inhabiting his novels and stories: ‘The compassion, valour, and love seen amongst these farmers is unparalleled.’ He sees true renunciants and saints in the farmers and labourers toiling in nature’s lap; they glorify the purity of nature and of human love as against the heartlessness of machines. Sardar Puran Singh considered labour to be indistinguishable from spiritual practice. He truly echoes the neo-Vedanta of Swami Vivekananda when he says: ‘Worship of humans is worship of God.’

Premchand, the best chronicler of the farmer’s life, strongly criticizes religious hypocrisy in his stories and essays; this often gives the impression that he is opposed to religion. He shows how landlords, capitalists, pontiffs, and the rich observe religious ceremonials but do not hesitate in resorting to exploitation, oppression, cheating, and violence for the sake of self, power, and position. In contrast, farmers and labourers do not go to temples, mosques, or churches, and do not undertake worship or religious ritual, but they have faith in God, religion, and propriety and practise service, compassion, honesty, hospitality, and simplicity in their



## Prabuddha Bharata

Munshi  
Premchand

lives. The wealthy are busy enjoying sense pleasures, the poor lead comparatively pure lives. In his novel *Rangbhumi* (Arena), Premchand shows how Sophia, a young Christian woman, is disillusioned with the hypocrisy and dogmatism of Christianity and turns to Hinduism, only to be repelled by the casteism, untouchability, and social discrimination of the latter. Premchand's characters oppose the hypocrisy of religion and not religion itself. They stick to truthfulness, righteousness, dharma, and faith even in the face of adversity, sorrow, and suffering. Premchand wanted the light of religion to come out of the closed corridors of religious institutions and illuminate the open fields of life in society.

The establishment of spoken Hindi—*khari boli*—as the language of poetry marked an important cultural shift in this era. Till then, spoken Hindi had been the language of prose alone, and poetry was written in Braj-bhasha or Avadhi dialects. Ayodhya Singh Upadhyay 'Hariaudh' and Maithilisharan Gupta were particularly successful in this regard. Intellectualism dominated this era due to the influence of Swami Dayananda, and the poets of this time tried to present the epic and Puranic lore from a rational and humanistic perspective. In his epic poem *Priya Pravas* (Lover's Sojourn), 'Hariaudh' portrayed Sri Krishna as a saviour of the world and not as the popular playful hero. Similarly, he

shows Radha engaged in the welfare of people instead of shedding copious tears all day long, pining for Krishna. If in the poems of Nathuram Shankar Sharma 'Shankar' we find the satirical tone of the Arya Samaj's denunciation of religious hypocrisy, in Maithilisharan Gupta's poetry we have the synthetic spirit of liberal Vaishnavism. He sung the glories of the holy lives of Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Chaitanya, and the Sikh gurus. He based his poems largely on Puranic and historical characters and, drawing attention to the past glories of India, inspired the national revival. His simple ethical poems reflect the virtues of non-violence, satyagraha, humanism, universal love, and sympathy for farmers, labourers, and women. Gupta and other poets of this era also exhibit occasional streaks of mysticism, which later became the characteristic feature of the next generation, the Chhayavad.

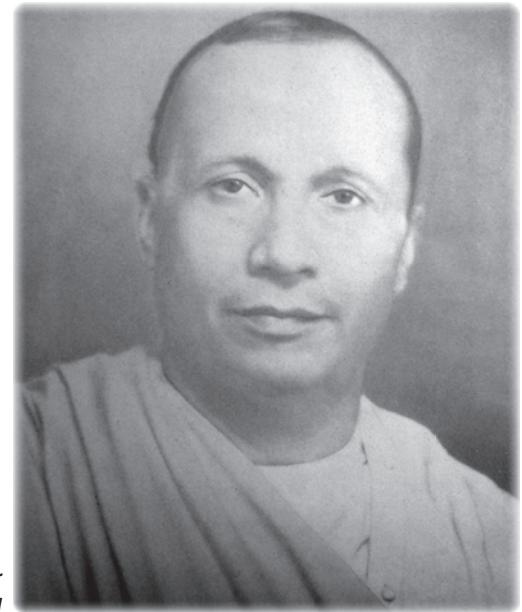
### The Chhayavad Era

Chhayavad or 'Shadowism', a neo-romantic movement that spanned the two world wars, emerged as the strongest voice of cultural liberation of the Hindi mind. Though this movement was mainly focused on poetry, it exerted a strong influence on the entire gamut of Hindi literature. Chhayavad brought to bear the light of freedom and revival on all aspects of the subject and style of Hindi literature—appreciation of mood, poetics, prosody, linguistic style, form, choice of words, and metaphor. This was an age of romantic revival in Hindi literature, having as a backdrop the non-cooperation movement and Rabindranath Tagore's winning the Nobel Prize for his *Gitanjali*. It provided expression to the pervasive urge for political independence as well as a literary and cultural awakening. Jaishankar Prasad, Sumitranandan Pant, Suryakant Tripathi 'Nirala', and Mahadevi Varma are the four major poets of this movement. They are often compared with such British romantic poets as Shelley, Keats, and Wordsworth. Rabindranath Tagore's influence on their poetry has also been suggested. Chhayavad is characterized by a modern individualistic perspective, subtle appreciation of feeling, emotionalism, im-

agination, love of nature, noble portrayal of feminine beauty, nationalism, pride in the glory of ancient India, and mysticism along with musicality, an ear for tempo and rhythm, and the use of metaphors, symbols, and imageries. Most importantly, every poet of this era has a unique philosophy that is reflected in the outlook on life presented in their poetry.

The romantic awakening of the Chhayavad era found expression in art too. The inspiration provided to the art movement in Bengal by Sister Nivedita also had its effect in the Hindi area. The reputed scholar and Banaras aristocrat Babu Raikrishna Das, who was a friend of Jaishankar Prasad, undertook a historical analysis of Indian painting and sculpture. He infused a new life into Mughal paintings, provided them with a new interpretation, and founded the Bharat Kala Bhavan, a unique art museum, at the Banaras Hindu University. A similar museum was established at Allahabad through the efforts of Pandit Brajmohan Vyas.

Jaishankar Prasad's magnum opus *Kamayani* is widely recognized as the best epic poem of modern Hindi literature. This epic narrates the evolution of human civilization alongside the process of Creation that followed the Deluge, and emphasizes inner human struggle over external striving. The only solution to the perpetual strife between the human head and heart lies in a synthesis of the two. Nature punished the gods for their excessive sensual indulgence by bringing about the Deluge. Humans should strike a balance between work and enjoyment: 'This is the conscious enjoyment of matter.' To Manu, who is dejected due to the destruction caused by the Deluge, Shraddha, Faith, gives the message of work and struggle instead of renunciation. In the 'Shraddha' section of *Kamayani* we hear the echo of Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak's *Gita Rahasya*. When Shraddha exhorts humankind to a new revival, through Manu—'Do not fear, O children of immortality!'—it reverberates the Vedic message of fearlessness as articulated by Swami Vivekananda: *Shrinvantu vishve amritasya putrab*. Jaishankar Prasad was an adherent of the non-dual Shaiva philosophy and therefore con-



*Jaishankar  
Prasad*

sidered matter and consciousness as two aspects of a unitary principle, and not two distinct entities: '*Ek tattva ki hi pradhanta / kaho use jad ya chetan*'. He saw the world not as an illusory entity, *mithya*, but as an indivisible part of the Atman:

*Apne dukh-sukh se pulakit yah  
vishva murt sacharachar;  
Chiti ka virat vapu mangal  
yah satya satat chir sundar.*

This objective world of the ambulant and the static, ecstatic over its sorrows and pleasures, is the vast auspicious body of consciousness, the ever true, the ever beautiful.

He believed that Indian thought had developed through the dialectics of *ananda-vada*, the quest for bliss, and *viveka-vada*, rationality. *Kamayani* has its denouement in *ananda-vada*:

*Samras the jad ya chetan, sundar sakar bana tha;  
Chetanta ek vilasti, anand akhand ghana tha.*

Whether it be matter or consciousness, it is homogeneous, and it took a beautiful form; it shone as unitary consciousness, an undivided mass of bliss.

Jaishankar Prasad's poems and plays are centred on the theme of cultural nationalism; the protagonists of his plays are the illustrious personalities of Indian history: Rajyashri, Harshavardhan,

Ajatashatru, Chandragupta, Skandagupta, Chanakya, Gautama Buddha, Dhruvaswamini, and the like. Through this portrayal of sterling personalities from the past he established the values of modernity and nationalism in place of medieval orthodoxy.

### **Suryakant Tripathi 'Nirala'**

Nirala, undoubtedly the best modern Hindi poet, became associated with the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement early in his life. In 1922 he started staying at the Udbodhan Office, Kolkata, to assist Swami Madhavananda in editing *Samavay*, a Hindi journal published by Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati. He had already met Swami Premananda at Mahishadal and had received his blessings by reciting the *Ramcharitmanas* for him. His article 'Yugavatar Sri Ramakrishna' had been published in *Samavay*. He came in close contact with Swami Saradananda during his stay at Udbodhan and recorded his experiences in the essay 'Swami Saradanandji aur Mein' (Swami Saradananda and I). In *Anamika* (The Nameless), the first anthology of his poems, he included verse translations of three Bengali poems by Swami Vivekananda—'Gai Geet Shunate Tomay' (A Song I Sing to Thee), 'Sakhar Prati' (To a Friend), and 'Nachuk Tahate Shyama' (And Let Shyama Dance There)—as also a long touching poem on the pioneering service activities of Swami Akhandananda titled 'Seva Prarambh' (The Beginning of Service). He translated the Bengali *Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita* into Hindi and named it *Sri Ramakrishna Vachanamrit*, which remains extremely popular. He also translated Swami Vivekananda's *Raja Yoga* into Hindi. Though he suffered from mental imbalance in the latter half of his life, the deep influence of his vibrant relationship with the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda tradition persisted. This is evidenced by 'Yugavtar Sri Ramakrishnadev ke Prati' (To Sri Ramakrishnadev, the Incarnation of the Age) in his anthology of poems *Naye Patte* (New Leaves) and his verse translation of 'Kali the Mother' by Swami Vivekananda. *Naye Patte* also contains one of his remarkable poems: 'Kailas mein Sharat'

(Autumn in Kailas). In this poem the poet goes on a dream trip to Mount Kailas. Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi leads the pilgrims, followed by Swami Vivekananda and other disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. It is noteworthy that he dedicated *Apara* (Earthly Knowledge), another collection of his poems, to Swami Vivekananda's disciple Sister Nivedita.

Nirala's works are influenced more by Ramakrishna-Vivekananda than by Rabindranath Tagore. One clearly finds the impress of Vivekananda's humanistic outlook in Nirala's sympathy for the poor and eagerness for social change. Like Maithilisharan Gupta, Nirala venerated the living cultural image of India instead of its material riches. We find the clarion call of the lion of Vedanta in his exhortation for national awakening:

*Tum ho mahan, tum sada ho mahan;  
Hai nashwar yah din bhav, kayarta kamparta.  
Brahm ho tum!  
Padraj-bhar bhi hai nahin pura yah vishvabhar.*

You are great, you have always been great; this faint-heartedness, this sensuality, is perishable. You are Brahman! All the weight of the world is no more than the dust of your feet.

He became popular for the use of blank verse. He compared this prosodic freedom to human spiritual liberation. Even his call for national freedom was couched in the language of spiritual liberation:

*Mukt ho sada hi tum  
Badha vihin bandh chhand jyon  
Dube anand mein sachchidanand rup.*

You are ever free, like the unobstructed flow of blank verse, of the nature of Existence-Knowledge-Bliss—immersed in bliss.

The title of his most popular poem 'Ram ki Shaktipuja' (Rama's Worship of Shakti) reminds one of Swami Saradananda's *Bharate Shakti Puja* (Shakti Worship in India). Nirala's songs addressed to the mother-power also point to the spiritual ethos of his works. After the bhakti age of Kabir, Surdas, and Tulsidas, it was Nirala who composed prayerful songs steeped in devotion.

A graceful portrayal of nature and an exquisite imagination are the striking features of Sumitranandan Pant's works. He had his first lessons in nature appreciation and creative imagination in the Himalayan settings of his birthplace: Kausani in Almora. His study of Tilak's *Gita Rahasya*, the Upanishads, *Sri Ramakrishna Vachanamrit*, and the works of Swamis Vivekananda and Ramtirth, made a deep impression on his young mind. He writes: 'I received special inspiration from the books on neo-spirituality, that is, the works of Sri Ramakrishna, Ramtirth, and Vivekananda; and the life of Paramahamsaji [Ramakrishna] appeared to be mystery personified.' Pointing to Sri Ramakrishna's leading role in the Indian renaissance, he observes: 'The birth of Sri Ramakrishna symbolized the birth of a new India.' It is reported that in 1935 he came in contact with Swami Chinmayananda of the Ramakrishna Kutir, Almora, who taught him how to overcome depression through meditation. In a poem he revises Swami Vivekananda's visit to Almora. He successfully translated many of Swami Vivekananda's poems, including 'The Song of the Sannyasin'.

In 1945, at a time when he was perplexed by Marxism, Gandhism, and such other doctrines, he happened to meet Sri Aurobindo. He first visited the Aurobindo Ashrama, along with the troupe of the famous dancer Uday Shankar, at the invitation of Ambalal Purani. Later, during his stay at Madras, he frequented the ashrama on a number of occasions. He obtained permanent solution to his personal as well as various social and cultural dilemmas in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy. Having wended his way through Chhayavad mysticism and Marxism, he voiced a new cultural humanism under the influence of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy. This humanism made possible the wonderful synthesis of human being and God, heaven and earth, the spiritual and the material, the nation and the world, society and the individual, body and soul.

Following in the footsteps of Pant, Narendra Sharma too highlighted Sri Aurobindo's philosophy in the poems he wrote after the songs of *Lal Nishan* (Red Insignia). His poems often speak of uniting

*bhu-raj*, the dust of the earth, with *suraj*, the sun, which draws on Sri Aurobindo's dream of raising the earth to heaven. Mahadevi Varma's poems contain a deep strain of mysticism; but it is not so deep as to overshadow the soft strain of Buddha's compassion. She created many poignant literary portraits of suffering women and laid the foundation of independent thought for women's liberation.

The works of nationalist poets like Makhanlal Chaturvedi and Balkrishna Sharma 'Navin' reveal a touch of spirituality and mysticism alongside intense feelings of patriotism and sacrifice, but the deep struggle with spiritual and cultural questions seen in Ramdhari Singh 'Dinkar' remains unmatched. Though he is known as a rebel poet with nationalistic leanings, the strains of his poetry reveal the tension between love and revolution, activity and renunciation, violence and non-violence, war and peace, Marx and Gandhi. His analysis of important historical questions on Indian culture in simple prose is incomparable. In *Sanskriti ke Char Adhyay* (Four Chapters of Culture)—an extremely interesting book, much like Jawaharlal Nehru's *Discovery of India*—he explores India's composite culture. The synthesis of Aryan and non-Aryan cultures, the rise of Buddhism, the harmony of Hinduism and Islam, and the Indian revival in reaction to British rule engage his deepest thoughts. He has great respect for Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, and his prose and poetry resounds with Swami Vivekananda's message of practical Vedanta. He questions the one-sided growth of science and holds the synthesis of science and spirituality to be the best for humanity. Towards the end of his life he was influenced by the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo and wrote a book on him titled *Chetana ki Shikha* (The Flame of Awareness). He took the issue of harmony between Hinduism and Islam for the unity of the nation very seriously and stressed Swami Vivekananda's concept of 'Vedanta brain and Islam body' as a solution.

Acharya Hazariprasad Dwivedi, another great Hindi literary critic, dwelt deeply on issues of culture and literature. He placed Kabir on the high seat

reserved for littérateurs, unravelled the mystique of Kalidas's and Rabindranath's works, and wrote about Indian culture in a modern liberal humanistic vein. Like Rabindranath, he had an unshakable faith in the 'victory march of humanity'. He considered religion and culture to be complementary. He believed that Indian culture was a synthetic mix of Aryans, non-Aryans, gandharva, asura, and such other elements and felt that its values of truthfulness, non-violence, friendship, sense control, spiritual practice, and dispassion were relevant even today. He believed that unity between Hindus and Muslims could be based on three factors: (i) religion and spirituality, (ii) commerce, and (iii) scientific outlook. But, to Hazariprasad Dwivedi, Hindu-Muslim unity is a means to the end, and not an end in itself. The end was the elevation of humans from the mundane beastly level of selfishness to the seat of genuine humanity; taking them to the realm of truth, justice, and liberality: 'Total human welfare alone can be our goal.' His novels, essays, and speeches are replete with fresh insights into Indian religious practices and spiritual tradition and its highest attainments.

Taking the spoken and written word to be the conclusive source of all history, the reputed archaeologist and historian Vasudev Sharan Agrawal developed a new method of historical analysis through his study of culture. He undertook an exhaustive cultural study of the Vedas, Puranas, Mahabharata, Ashtadhyayi, Kadambari, and Harshacharita. He highlighted the concept of 'sons of the soil' based on the 'Bhumi Sukta' of the Vedas and presented a practical social commentary on the challenges of nation-building that followed independence. Analysis of Indian culture has been a favourite subject with all creative Hindi writers; this is as much true of Vidyanivas Mishra, Shivprasad Singh, and Kubernath Rai as of Hazariprasad Dwivedi. While Kubernath Rai focused on the discovery of 'Chinmay Bharat' (Conscious India), Vidyanivas Mishra expounded on the eternity of Hinduism. In his study of philosophy and culture, Shivprasad Singh made his way from the socialism of Ram Manohar Lohia to existentialism and finally settled upon the

philosophy of Sri Aurobindo. He was deeply influenced by his meeting with the Mother at Pondicherry; the Mother's shadow is clearly present in his novel 'Nila Chand' (Blue Moon). He published the *Uttar Yogi* ('The Transcendent Yogi') to mark Sri Aurobindo's birth centenary. The essayist Krishna Bihari Mishra recreated the *Ramakrishna Vachanamrit* in his *Kalpataru ki Utsav Lila* ('The Festive Play of the Wish-fulfilling Tree').

Phanishwar Nath 'Renu', the best storyteller of post-independence era, was personally devoted to Sri Ramakrishna. His writings capture social life—especially the folk culture of Purnea district—of Bihar. Among older novelists, Vrindavanlal Varma has depicted the local culture and heroes of Bundelkhand—including Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi—in his historical novels. The novels of Jainendra Kumar, Ilachandra Joshi, and Sachchidanand Hiranand Vatsyayan 'Ajneya' deal predominantly with psychological issues. Some of Ajneya's works are clearly influenced by existential thought. His 'Asadhya Vina' ('Unplayable Lute') reminds one of Zen philosophy. The representations of history and culture in the works of Rahul Sankritayan, Rangeya Raghav, and Yashpal are deeply influenced by Marxist thinking. The exquisite artistic delineation of the variety, depth, spirituality, refinement, and beauty of Indian culture in the historico-cultural novels of Acharya Hazariprasad Dwivedi can hardly be found elsewhere. In his novels the Vedic age, Kalidas, Banabhatta, and the religious practices, schools of philosophy, art and sculpture, and music and dance of medieval India are picturesquely portrayed as a huge outpouring of culture and history. His novel *Anamdas ka Potha* (Anamdas's File) is centred on the transparent and broad philosophical milieu of the Upanishads. Amritlal Nagar has effectively depicted the folk culture of the backward sections of society along with ancient and medieval culture.

### **Prayogvad, Experimentalism, and Pragativad, Progressivism**

The progressive outlook that succeeded the Chhayavad era brought to bear, in the main, the Marxist

perspective on life and the world, on individual and society, on past and future, on tradition and development. The progressivist deals with the high ethical values of workers, the oppressed classes, and women and analyses the beliefs, dispositions, and other forces that hampered their individual and social progress. Practices standing in the way of this goal were pointed out and superstitions and dogmas were critically evaluated. This movement presented the ideal of an equitable society free from discrimination and exploitation and sang the glories of socialism, peace, and progress. Literature after the Second World War came to be dominated by existential and nihilistic thought. Jargons such as 'modernism', 'spirit of the moment', 'concept of the little man', 'alienation', 'horror', and 'morbidity' cast their spell over all literature. 'Generation gap', the 'angry young man', and 'disillusionment' became hot topics of discussion. Many poets tried to highlight current predicaments through reinterpretation of old literary works. Such works include Ajneya's *Uttar Priyadarshi* (The Later Ashoka), Naresh Mehta's *Samsay ki Ek Rat* (A Night of Doubt) and *Mahaprasthan* (Great Departure), and Dharmvir Bharti's *Andha Yug* (Blind Age). Of these, *Andha Yug*, a ballad based on the Mahabharata, became very popular.

Gajanan Madhav Muktibodh is seriously concerned with analysing social problems and finding solutions. Always hopeful of a wonderful future for India and the rest of the world, he opposed existentialism and laid stress upon writers' responsibilities towards society. His poetry displays a deep desire to cut off narrow middle-class self-interests and become one with the general public; in a similar vein, his poems reveal a distinct tone of self-criticism and introspection. Kunwar Narayan based his minor epic *Atmajayi* (Conqueror of Self) on the *Katha Upanishad*. However, instead of the yearning for self-realization, this poem lays emphasis on generational struggle and the encounter with death. The prestigious Jnanpith Award for 2005 has been given to Kunwar Narayan for his important poetic composition *Vajashrava ke Bahane* (The Excuses of Vajashrava). In this work Kunwar Narayan has

made a serious attempt to present the spiritual message and philosophy of the *Katha Upanishad* in poetic language against the background of Nachiketa's return from the world of Death.

Present-day literature is mainly secular and concentrates on socio-political issues. In recent times, with the rise of communalism, casteism, violence, terrorism, consumerism, and marketization, voices are being raised in support of secularism, democracy, non-violence, peace, swadeshi, national integrity, and environmental protection. There has been a rise in literature showing greater human empathy in contrast to rampant material fetishism. Concern about dalits, women, children, minority communities, and the environment are increasingly being reflected in contemporary writings. This is an auspicious sign for the broadening and cleansing of the human heart, more so when women and members of the oppressed classes are coming forward to express their pain and struggle, and are asserting their rights in their own language. ☰

(Continued from page 464)

It starts in the mind, because the mind, being infinite and unbounded, is capable of encompassing 'That', nurturing this reality at first as an idea, moulding it, maturing it—like the pearl oyster is said to mature a drop of Swati rain into a pearl—and in the process being transformed and absorbed into 'That'. This is indeed the state of same-sightedness where all boundaries fade and only the unlimited remains. We become the ocean, as indeed we always were, and as indeed we are, fully, even now. ☰

## References

1. Rig Veda, 1.164.46.
2. *Isha Upanishad*, 1.
3. *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, 2.4.5.
4. See, for instance, *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, 4.4.19, and *Katha Upanishad*, 4.11.
5. *Chhandogya Upanishad*, 3.14.1.
6. *Bhagavadgita*, 2.48.
7. *Katha Upanishad*, 2.1.11.
8. *Mundaka Upanishad*, 3.2.9.

# Girish and the Devotees of Sri Ramakrishna

Swami Chetanananda

**L**IFE is lonely and painful without loved ones. We are not born with friends and foes; we make friends when we bind each other with love. A true friend steadfastly and unselfishly stands beside us at times of joy and sorrow, plenty and famine, peace and war. Although unselfish love is rare in this world, the avatars and some great souls have shown us how to live in this world selflessly with love and joy, peace and tranquillity.

During his last days Jesus' disciple John lived in Ephesus. He was too old and infirm to speak in the church every Sunday. But every Sunday the devotees of Jesus would carry him in a chair to the entrance of the church, where he would meet with the congregation. The enthusiastic audience would request John: 'Please tell us something about Jesus.' John would say in his feeble voice: 'Love one another.' Every Sunday he gave the same message, until one day someone asked: 'Have you not heard anything else from Jesus?' John replied: 'What else is there to say? That is the final message. Whatever is needful in life is there in that message, "Love one another".'

As a thread ties together all the pearls in a necklace, so God connects all beings. Sri Ramakrishna said: 'Sometimes God acts as the magnet and the devotee as the needle. God attracts the devotee to Himself. Again, sometimes the devotee acts as the magnet and God as the needle. Such is the attraction of the devotee that God comes to him, unable to resist his love.'<sup>1</sup>

This article describes how Girish and the householder devotees of the Master interacted with each other and shared their memories of the Master. Although they were not related by blood, they developed deep spiritual relationships by the grace of the Master. These relationships became strong and solid by means of their mutual love and respect.

Despite his complex character, Girish commanded both love and respect from everyone in the Master's circle for several reasons: first, the Master singled him out among the devotees for his unflinching devotion; second, Girish was a very famous actor and playwright; third, he was a creative genius and had a charismatic personality; and fourth, he was older than most of the Master's devotees and disciples. In the divine drama of Sri Ramakrishna, Girish played an important role. He attracted many people who found his company to be inspiring and reassuring.

## M (Mahendranath Gupta)

M recalled:

'The Master went to see the play *Chaitanya Lila* in September 1884. We went with him. Girish Ghosh arranged a box seat for the Master and engaged a man to fan him with a big palm-leaf fan. The Master asked: "How much will they charge?" "Nothing," I replied. "They are happy that you have come to see the performance." Then the Master said joyfully: "I chant Mother's name, so they do all these things for me." It is amazing that he was reluctant to take any credit for himself. The Mother was doing everything.'

'Sri Ramakrishna went on another occasion to see Girish's performance at the Star Theatre. He gave him a rupee since he did not want to see it for free. Putting the money on his head, Girish began to dance. He regarded it as prasad from the Master and preserved it in his shrine.'

'One day, while going to Balaram's house, the Master passed near the home of Girish Ghosh, who was then seated on his veranda. Pointing to him, Narayan, a young devotee, said to the Master: "There is Girish Ghosh, who wrote *Chaitanya Lila*." As the Master was by nature humble, he sa-

luted Girish with folded hands. Girish followed the Master to Balaram's. There the Master said to him: "The play is well written. Many people will derive joy from it." Girish replied: "Sir, I am an unworthy person. I do not deserve such a compliment. Wherever I sit, the earth becomes impure seven cubits deep." Immediately the Master entered into an ecstatic state and sang this song:

If only I can pass away repeating Durga's name,  
How can you then, O Blessed One,  
Withhold from me deliverance,  
Wretched though I may be?  
I may have stolen a drink of wine, or killed a  
child unborn,  
Or slain a woman or a cow,  
Or even caused a brahmin's death;  
But, though it all be true,  
Nothing of this can make me feel the least  
uneasiness;  
For through the power of your sweet name  
My wretched soul may still aspire  
Even to Brahmanhood.

'Listening to this song, Girish felt consoled. The Master blessed him. After that Girish would inquire about when the Master was coming to Calcutta and would wait for him at the homes of his hosts. Gradually, his life began to change. One day, he and his friend went to Dakshineswar by carriage. Both were dead drunk. Holding onto the Master, Girish began to sing: "O Lord, where is your sweetheart Radha?" Later the Master said: "What faith Girish has! It is so deep that it cannot be measured."



'It was not an accident that the Master went to the theatre. It was so destined. It was an important chapter of the avatarā's divine play. One of the epithets of God is *patitapavan*, the saviour of souls. This aspect of the Master was manifested there. God goes to devotees, wherever they live. The magnet attracts the needle, and again the needle attracts the magnet. God knows what is in people's minds. He listens to the call of the devotees' hearts. As parents take back their wayward children, so God goes to

his wanton devotees and brings them back to him.

'At that time many people scorned the theatre because courtesans would act in the plays. A member of the Brahmo Samaj remarked: "When the actors and actresses of the theatre began to visit Sri Ramakrishna, we stopped visiting him." The Brahmos behaved like good boys. But God sees inside the devotees and pays no attention to their outer behaviour. When the devotees are in deep trouble, they call on God wholeheartedly. Girish's inner call reached the Master's ear, so the Master himself went to bring Girish back to his fold. Can a father reject his own son?

*'Chaitanya Lila* was Girish's *naivedya*, an offering of worship, and he reached God through it. How much devotion he expressed in this play! An ordinary person could not have written such a drama. There are many playwrights, but how many have such sincere devotion to God? In Girish's writing two important things are present: his literary skill and his exuberant devotion. You won't find such high ideals in Shakespeare.

'Girish was a heroic devotee. It is said that he had practised severe austerities in his early life. He would bathe in the Ganga every day, eat boiled rice and ghee, and continually chant Shiva's name. Like an ascetic, he did not shave or cut his hair, and he walked barefooted. He thought that he would see God by practising these kinds of disciplines, but it did not work out. Without God's grace none can see him. Attaining the Master's grace was the last chapter of Girish's life.

'Girish could not attain God by practising austerities. When self-effort failed, he took the opposite direction. He joined the theatre and began acting and writing plays. In that environment he became addicted to drinking and developed other bad habits. It is said that he remarked: "If God Himself comes to me as a guru and pulls me, only then will I return to Him. Otherwise Girish will continue to lead his wanton life." As a heroic devotee, he did not want to hide anything. He drank publicly and paid no attention to others' opinions. Through such things one tries to prove one's manliness, though in a perverse way. Not many can act like this.

'Girish took a rather perverse path, and his true devotional nature remained hidden. Whatever he might have done, Girish as a devotee was pure, immortal, awakened. Gradually a battle began between Girish the superb playwright and Girish the supreme devotee; the latter eventually won. Like a loving father, the Master lifted up Girish, his self-absorbed son. The Master went to the theatre to perform this great task. This gave him a new name, *patitapavan*, saviour of the fallen. But the Master also saved many other wayward people in the theatre in addition to Girish. ...'

'When Girish was reluctant to continue acting in the theatre, the Master said to him: "Please continue as you are doing. This theatre also spreads the Divine Mother's message. People will learn much from your plays."

'To some people Girish was a lion among men, but with the devotees he behaved like a child. He had a great heart. Whenever we visited him, he would give up his work and talk to us. He had tremendous humility and longing. That is why the Master said: "Girish has one hundred twenty-five per cent faith." Girish recognized the Master to be an avatara and began to talk about it to others.

'God is same-sighted: "He makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good." Seeing Girish's redemption, others felt assured and hopeful, and they gradually began to rectify themselves. Even courtesans started to better themselves through his grace.'

'Buddha, Christ, and Chaitanya also took on this role. Christ had a devotee named Mary Magdalene. She belonged to a very wealthy family. When her parents died she moved in the wrong direction, but she had devotion within. When later she became repentant, Christ went and rescued her. After his crucifixion, Christ appeared first to Mary Magdalene, which proved how much love he had for her. Buddha redeemed the life of Ambapali; and during his itinerant days, Chaitanya transformed the life of a rich courtesan. This is the duty of avatars. They come to uplift devotees to the spiritual plane. Avatars see inside human beings. When they see purity and devotion within, they induce those people

to return to their fold. Ordinary people cannot understand this divine play of the avatars.'



'One day the Master asked Girish to immerse himself in the Ganga and pray: "O all-purifying Mother Ganga, please bless me." Girish unwillingly did what the Master said. But after dipping himself into the Ganga, his mind became filled with bliss. Such was the greatness of Mother Ganga! The Master said: "In this Kali Yuga, Ganga water is the veritable manifestation of Brahman."

'Another time Girish asked the Master: "Why do I feel depressed from time to time?" The Master replied: "As long as you are in the world, the cloud of maya will arise. Don't be afraid of it. It is the nature of the mind to move sometimes up and sometimes down." Girish said: "Sir, you have the power to make everybody pure and unattached, whether one is a householder or a monk. You are beyond all laws." What faith he had! The Master said to him: "Yes, it is possible. Exuberant devotion transcends all scriptural injunctions." Here the Master gave himself away. Who could admit such a thing except an avatara? Whatever Girish asked for from the Master he received. He said to the Master: "Sir, what I was and what I have become—just by thinking of you!"

'The Master didn't give importance to a person's external behaviour; he saw the interior. Once he said: "I can see the inside of each person as one sees an object through a glass case." He could see not only the present life of a person but his past and future lives too. Though Girish's external life was to some extent unconventional, basically he was a spiritual person.'

'Once the Master visited Girish's house. Girish bought some refreshments at the market and served them on plates that were put directly on the carpet where the devotees were seated. Balaram Basu, a staunch devotee of the Master, was also present. Girish's style of service upset Balaram, because in his opinion it was not the proper way to serve the Master. Sri Ramakrishna looked at Balaram and told him with a smile: "This is the custom here. When I go to your house, you may serve me in your way."

Balaram was an orthodox Vaishnava devotee.<sup>2</sup>

M also said: 'Girish Ghosh once said to the Master: "Sir, my servant was down with a fever for six days. Your prasad cured him." At once the Master scolded him: "Fie on you! What a small-minded person you are! You are asking for pumpkins and gourds from God! You should ask for immortality from Him."

On 6 December 1884 Bankimchandra Chatterjee, a famous Bengali writer, met Sri Ramakrishna at Adhar Sen's Calcutta residence. The Master invited Bankim to visit him at Dakshineswar and the latter accepted. Kumudbandhu Sen recorded M's reminiscences of this event:

Girish knew Bankim very well, so the Master sent me with Girish to Bankim's. Bankim had promised the Master at Adhar's that he would visit the Master at Dakshineswar, so I was sent to find out the date of his visit. We went to Bankim's Calcutta residence and as soon as he heard of our arrival he came and received us cordially. Girish and Bankim began to talk about their writings, and I stood there and listened to them.

The age difference between Girish and Bankim was eight or ten years, and both were literary men. They became absorbed in their discussion. I was then thirty years old. I listened to them attentively. When their conversation was over, I mentioned the Master's invitation. Girish then said: 'You wanted to visit Dakshineswar, so the Master has sent us to ask when it would be convenient for you to go there.' Bankim replied: 'I have a great desire to visit him. The other day I felt tremendous joy seeing him at Adhar's. Not only do I have a desire to see him at Dakshineswar, I am also eager to bring him to my home here. Now I am extremely busy with my work; I am unable to tell you now when I shall get time to go there. Whenever I find an opportunity, I shall let you (pointing to Girish) know.' Unfortunately, Bankim's wish was not fulfilled.<sup>3</sup>

After the crucifixion of Jesus, his disciples came together in order to protect themselves

from persecution. They would meet at a devotee's house at night, make their plans, and talk passionately of the greatness and glory of Christ. Just as Christ's disciples were united by their love for him and for each other, so Sri Ramakrishna's disciples and devotees were bound with a cord of unselfish love. Mahendranath Datta wrote:

One day Girish invited M to his house for dinner. While eating, Girish said: 'This food is sanctified with bliss and love! It is a great joy to have the company of the Master's devotees and to eat together!' In fact, the devotees had so much love for one another that they would visit each other's homes and eat without any invitation. Each one felt that the other's home was his own home and the other's food was pure and sanctified. They felt so much attraction for each other that they would feel a pang of separation if they did not see a particular devotee for a few days. They loved to be together and talk about the Master.<sup>4</sup>

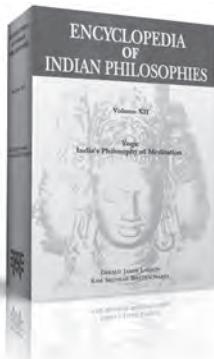
(To be continued)

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# REVIEWS

For review in PRABUDDHA BHARATA,  
publishers need to send **two** copies of their latest publications.



## **Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies: Vol. XII Yoga: India's Philosophy of Meditation**

Ed. Gerald James Larson and  
Ram Shankar Bhattacharya

Motilal Banarsi Dass, 41 U A Bungalow  
Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi 110 007.  
E-mail: [mlbd@vsnl.com](mailto:mlbd@vsnl.com). 2008. 784 pp.  
Rs 1,395.

Georg Feuerstein, the celebrated author of several works on Yoga, asserts: 'We can study the scriptures of Yoga, both ancient and modern, and allow their esoteric knowledge and wisdom to enrich our understanding of human nature.' The text under review fulfils Feuerstein's aspirations. This encyclopaedic volume, divided into two parts, is a unique endeavour on the part of thirteen eminent Indian and Western scholars to introduce the contents of classical texts on yoga through English translations and summaries to all those who intend to make an intensive study of the two major traditions of yoga: Patanjala and hatha yoga.

The editors claim a fourfold objective for this volume: (i) to elucidate how yoga can be considered as one of the Indian philosophical systems, (ii) to distinguish between yoga as a philosophy and yoga as a tradition of experiential practice, (iii) to segregate the experimental or experiential claims of yoga from the philosophical claims, and (iv) to elucidate the meaning as well as the utility of the term 'yoga'.

Some of the important themes dealt with in Part One—Introduction to the Philosophy of Yoga—include 'The History of Yoga', 'Yoga and Sāṃkhya: The Important Differences', and 'Yoga, Sāṃkhya and Buddhist thought'. It traces the connection of Patanjali's *Yoga Sutra* with other traditions of yoga: the yoga of the *Bhagavadgītā*, the 'Mokshadharma' section of the *Mahabharata*, and the *Yoga Upanishads*. It refers to philosophical and philological as well as social anthropological treatments of yoga advocated by a galaxy of outstanding scholars. It

discusses the controversial issue of composition of the *Yoga Sutra* and the identity of its compiler, and reviews the interpretations given by Vyasa, Vachaspati Mishra, and Vijnanabhikshu of such concepts as *yoga*, *samadhi*, *samapatti*, *samyama*, *vibhuti*, *vitarka*, *vichara*, *ananda*, *asmita*, *jnana*, and *kaivalya*. It outlines the probable origins of the hatha yoga system and of other satellite or sectarian yoga traditions like the Pancharatra, Pashupata, Kapalika, Kalamukha, Natha-Siddha, Kanphata-Yogi, and Kaula cults, whose yoga methods are derived from their respective sectarian theologies.

Georg Feuerstein's observation that 'the yoga tradition has not ceased to change and grow, adapting to new sociocultural conditions' is testified to by Autumn Jacobsen's brief sketch of contemporary yoga movements, which include the yoga traditions of the Mysore Palace, Anusara Yoga, Ashtanga Yoga, Bikram Yoga, Integral Yoga, Iyengar Yoga, Kriya Yoga, Siddha Yoga, and the like. Each of these traditions has evolved through the integration of neo-hatha-yoga techniques integrated with one or other of the following disciplines: raja yoga, bhakti yoga, jnana yoga, karma yoga, and japa yoga.

The second part of this encyclopaedia is a maiden attempt to rectify the dearth of English translations and summaries of the twenty-eight major Sanskrit commentaries and annotations on the *Yoga Sutra* and related works as well as the twenty-six Sanskrit manuals on hatha yoga and allied traditions. Also appended are discussion on the *Yogavasishtha* and twenty *Yoga Upanishads*. The volume is enriched by useful endnotes, an extensive bibliography, and a comprehensive glossary-index.

According to Larson, hatha yoga is to be viewed as 'a distinct satellite form of Yoga'. It is plausible that, historically, there are tenuous links between the system of hatha yoga—whose origins may be traced to Matsyendranatha and Gorakshanatha—and the Patanjala system, and that the terminology of hatha yoga is influenced by Patanjala Yoga, which the former looks up to for 'cultural legitimacy'.

I would, however, contend that recent unpublished

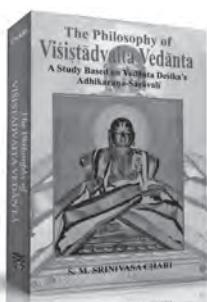
researches attempt to prove the greater antiquity of the hatha yoga tradition which developed from rudiments traceable to the Vedic Samhitas, such Upanishads as the *Brihadaranyaka*, *Chhandogya*, *Katha*, *Shvetashvatara*, and *Maitri*, besides the later Yoga Upanishads, the Smritis, as well as epic and Puranic literature. Even the oldest Smritis, datable to the beginning of the common era, contain elements of hatha yoga blended with other rituals. Moreover, Patanjali might have laid exclusive emphasis on mind control—*chitta-vritti nirodha*—as a counterpoint to the excessive emphasis on bodily discipline given by hatha yoga. Further, hatha yoga is viewed as an effective aid to the attainment of *kaivalya*, the goal of raja yoga. Consequently, hatha yoga and Patanjala yoga may justifiably be seen as complementary to each other.

This encyclopaedia has the singular distinction of being the most authentic analytical and evaluative study of the history of the two main traditions of classical yoga. This compendium of yoga will be of immense value to all students and researchers of Indian philosophy and Sanskrit literature who wish to make an in-depth study of classical yoga with special reference to Patanjali's *Yoga Sutra* and its commentaries as well as textual studies on hatha yoga.

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### **The Philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta: A Study Based on Vedānta Deśīka's Adhikaraṇa-Sāravalī**

S M Srinivasa Chari

Motilal Banarsi das. 2008. xxxviii + 397 pp. Rs 795.

**T**attva-mukta-kalapa and *Adhikarana-saravali* are two popular treatises in which Vedanta Deshika elaborates upon the doctrine of Vishishtadvaita Vedanta. The translation of the latter, containing 562 Sanskrit verses, is the subject matter of the book under review. The original work is a study of Sri Ramanuja's *Brahma Sutra Bhashya* and presents the essential teachings of each of its *adhikaranas*, sections. Srinivasa Chari clarifies in the preface that he has not included all the verses that occur in the original text. He has selected and concentrated on only those that have a direct bearing on the philo-

sophical doctrines of Vishishtadvaita Vedanta as outlined in the *adhikaranas* of the *Brahma Sutra*. In the *Brahma Sutra* itself the number of *adhikaranas* is 156 according to Ramanujacharya, 196 as per Shankaracharya's commentary, and 222 for Madhvacharya. This variation is due to the commentators grouping the sutras variously.

The author, in translating this Sanskrit work into English, acknowledges that he has received assistance from two learned commentaries—*Adhikarana-chintamani* by Kumara Varadacharya, and *Padayojana* by Shatakopa Ramanujayati—and also from other books on the subject. To prove that Vishishtadvaita is more in conformity with the scriptures and with tradition than the other two major schools of Vedanta is the main thrust of the book. The text does not delve into elaborate discussions and confines itself to disputed issues alone. The emphasis is on stating the position of the Vishishtadvaita school conclusively. Therefore, this work is unique and demands study. Vedanta Deshika also establishes the connectivity between the various topics discussed and provides a rational justification for the sequence in which the sutras appear.

Ramanujacharya and Vedanta Deshika contend that the whole of the Vedas have a singular purport, and acquaintance with the ritualistic portion of the Vedas is essential for understanding the knowledge portion. Vedanta Deshika further contends that there is no contradiction between these two parts of the Vedas, either in respect of content or of aim. Arguments against Vishishtadvaita are taken up and answered throughout the book.

The second chapter delineates the nature of Brahman as the ultimate metaphysical Reality and as the primary cause of creation, sustenance, and dissolution of the universe. The qualities and attributes of Brahman are dealt with in the next chapter. The fourth chapter examines the position of Brahman as the source of all creation. In the fifth chapter the special position of Vishishtadvaita—that just as the soul resides within the body and is related to it, so also the universe constitutes the body of Brahman—is put forth. The process of creation is discussed in the next chapter. The seventh chapter points out that the *jivatman*, individual self, is a distinct spiritual entity with the qualities of eternity, knowledge, and agency and is related to Brahman much like a part to the whole. The next chapter deals with the means to attain Brahman. *Upasana*, spiritual practice, plays an important part in attaining to Brahman with

attributes. The last chapter deals with the final state of liberation in which the jiva, although liberated, continues to remain separate, enjoying the bliss of proximity to Brahman.

The learned author also makes a brief mention of all the works that have been written against the arguments put forth by the Vishishtadvaita school of Vedanta and points out the flaws in them. He details the main points that the three schools differ on and holds the view that qualified monism, or the school established by Ramanujacharya, conforms to the Upanishads wholly, while the other schools fail in this respect.

In India, acceptance of diverse faiths and beliefs led to numerous Sanskrit works on religion. Soon the time came when huge books were written to criticize each other's stand. Polemics consumed the time of scholars. Sri Ramakrishna's view that all these different schools are but different paths to God, shifts the emphasis from dry logic and argumentation to the ecstasy of God-realization. That God cannot be limited by our conceptions, that God can be with form, without form, and much more even was his conclusion based on personal mystical experiences.

As regards readability, it would have helped if the Sanskrit terms and quotes were made available as footnotes in the relevant pages rather than in the body of the text. Frequent use of italics makes the reading laboured. The introduction could have included a brief outline of the different schools of Vedanta and the dialectics of Indian philosophy, so as to enable a better access to the newcomer.

Srinivasa Chari has many books to his credit, which speaks of his erudition in the philosophy of Vishishtadvaita. He has presented a clear picture of all the basic tenets of this school in this volume, thus making it a good companion for all who want to study the contributions of Ramanujacharya to Indian thought. The author has included a didactic summary of all the topics discussed and a brief outline of the relevant sutras. The table of *vidyas*, meditations, that appear in the book with cross-reference to the Upanishads and the *Brahma Sutra* is useful. A comprehensive glossary, bibliography, and index have significantly added to the book's value. This work should prove valuable for all who want to make a comparative study of the various commentaries on the *Brahma Sutra*.

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Advaita Ashrama, Kolkata



### No One Is a Stranger

A Vedanta Kesari Presentation

Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Chennai  
600 004. E-mail: [srkmath@vsnl.com](mailto:srkmath@vsnl.com). 2007.  
vi + 250 pp. Rs 45.

This is a collection of thought-provoking articles on how to establish and sustain interpersonal relationships. Relationships built on the foundation of love, tolerance, and contentment help maintain harmony and coherence, and for this a spiritual stance is an absolute necessity; this is the main thesis of the book. While introducing the volume, Swami Atmashraddhananda states: 'As this "inner" keeps evolving, becoming wiser and purer, the "outer" also experiences this change. This is all about the story of inter-personal relationships.'

The articles that follow discuss and analyse this central theme. This is suggested by such article titles as 'Nurturing Interpersonal Relations and Living the Spiritual Life—Some Guidelines', 'No One Is a Stranger, My Child', 'Sri Ramakrishna on Good Relations', 'Inter-personal Relationship in the Bhagavad Gita', 'Understanding Human Relationships in the Light of the Upanishads', 'Inter-personal Relationships in the Workplace', and 'The Teacher-Student Relationship'. Most of the contributors are monastic members of the Ramakrishna Order. There are essays by Swamis Ashokananda, Yatiswarananda, Vireswarananda, Ranganathananda, Smaranananda, and Prabhananda. The Dalai Lama has also contributed an illuminating article on 'Ethics in Our Relationships'. The practical tips on success in inter-personal dealings provided by these contributors include cultivation of positive attitude, detachment and clarity of thought, pleasantness in dealings, selflessness, equanimity, and politeness. Several reminiscences of Sri Sarada Devi and some of the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna have also been included to demonstrate the spiritualizing of human relationships. Inspiring stories highlighting the theme and an e-symposium with inputs on the subject from the youth add to the utility of the book.

This inspiring collection will be liked by spiritual seekers as also by a large cross-section of people, for every human being is striving for mental peace; and congenial human relationships are essential for peace and fulfilment.

Dr Chetana Mandavia  
Professor, Plant Physiology  
Junagadh Agricultural University, Junagadh

# REPORTS

## News from Branch Centres

**Ramakrishna Mission Saradapitha, Belur**, organized a ten-day residential leadership camp for rural youths at Jujursha village, Hooghly district, from 8 to 17 May 2009. 80 students from several villages participated in the camp.

As a part of its Yuvajagriti (Youth Awareness) programme, **Ramakrishna Math, Ulsoor**, conducted a one-day seminar for the principals of Bangalore University First Grade (Degree) Colleges on the 'Role of Educational Institutions in Imparting Moral and Ethical Values to College Students' on 29 May. The seminar was co-organized with the Bangalore University First Grade College Principals' Association. Besides, on 5 June the centre started distributing, as a part of its educational service activities in rural areas, notebooks, stationery, and other study materials to about 13,000 students of government primary and high schools situated in remote or backward villages in the Bangalore area.

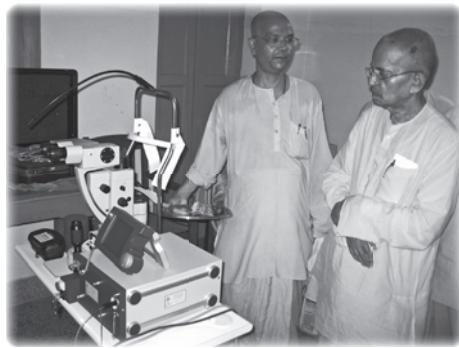
Srimat Swami Atmasthanandaji Maharaj, President, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, inaugurated the newly renovated Pallimangal building at **Belur Math** on 7 June.

**Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya, Coimbatore**, organized the 42nd Junior Men's National Boxing Championship in collaboration with the Indian Boxing Federation from 2 to 7 June.

**Ramakrishna Math, Chennai**, conducted a three-day All Tamil Nadu Youth Retreat in which 200 young men participated from 4 to 6 June.

On 14 June Srimat Swami Smarananandaji Maharaj, Vice President, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, unveiled a 6½-foot statue of Swami Vivekananda at the **Mekhliganj** sub-centre of **Ramakrishna Math, Cooch Behar**.

Swami Prabhananda, General Secretary, Rama-



*Swami  
Prabhananda  
inaugurating  
the diabetic  
retinopathy wing  
of the Sarada  
Netralaya at  
Patna*

krishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, inaugurated the diabetic retinopathy wing of the Sarada Netralaya at **Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Patna**, on 16 June.

**Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Guwahati**, conducted a medical camp during the Ambuvachi Mela at Kamakhya Dham, from 22 to 25 June, in which 3,611 patients were treated.

On 27 June **Ramakrishna Ashrama, Mysore**, organized a conclave of editors of magazines published by different publishing houses of the Ramakrishna Order. In all, eleven editors and representatives of the magazines and six resource persons attended the conclave. Besides, on 28 June, as a part of the tenth anniversary of its Kannada monthly *Viveka Prabha*, the centre organized a seminar on 'Significance of Spiritual Journalism' in which more than 400 devotees and journalists participated.

## Achievements

**Ramakrishna Mission, Viveknagar**, has received the Best School Award for the year 2008-09 on the basis of the performance of its students in Junior Talent Search Test, conducted by Jagadis Bose National Science Talent Search, Kolkata. Besides, three students of the Vidyalaya have won the Dasharath Deb Memorial Award 2009 for their excellent performance in AISS (class-10) examination, 2008. Each of them received a cash award of Rs 5,000.

## Relief

**Cyclone Aila Relief** · In June 2009 Dhaka centre in **Bangladesh** distributed 15,220 kg rice, 6,000 kg dal, 7,998 oral rehydration salts (ORS) packets, 1,010 saris, and 4,229 sets of utensils (each set containing a bucket, a plate, a cooking pot, and a water-storage pot) to 7,263 cyclone-affected families of 79 villages



*Collection, arrangement, and distribution of items for victims of the Sri Lanka civil war*

in Khulna and Satkira districts. In India, also during June, the following centres continued relief activities distributing several items. **Belgharia:** 63,600 kg chira, 6,500 kg sugar, 295,000 halogen tablets, 1,250 kg bleaching powder, and 600 kg lime to 7,405 families in 11 villages of Gosaba block, South 24-Parganas district. **Manasadwip:** 4,460 kg chira, 500 kg sugar, 120 kg biscuits, 4,260 ORS packets, 50,000 halogen tablets, and 144 bales of used garments to 4,271 families in 16 villages of Namkhana and Pathar Pratima blocks in South 24-Parganas district. **Narendrapur:** 210,234 plates of cooked food (khichri, rice, and dalma), 21,080 kg chira, 8,005 kg gur, 322 kg sugar, 51 kg biscuits, 1,170 kg milk powder, 1,520 kg nutritious food for children, 105,000 ORS packets, 1,018,000 halogen tablets, 11,500 kg bleaching powder, 3,247 water jerrycans, 3,980 tarpaulins, and 680 hygiene kits (each kit containing 1 antiseptic bottle, 6 soap-bars, 2 soap-boxes, 1 comb, 1 piece of cloth, 12 safety pins, 1 nylon cord, 1 nail-cutter, 1 bucket, 2 cups, 1 jug, 2 matchboxes, and 20 candles) to 17,884 families at 63 villages of Gosaba, Kakdwip, Kultali, Mathurapur II, Namkhana, Pathar Pratima, and Sagar blocks in South 24-Parganas district. Besides, the centre treated 437 patients. **Rahara:** 6,300 kg chira, 1,150 kg sugar, 162 kg milk powder, 549 kg biscuits, 30 kg gur, 50 kg muri, 10,244 l mineral water, 450,000 halogen tablets, 600 candles, 2,000 matchboxes, 40 saris, 30 dhotis, 30 bales of used garments, and 750 kg bleaching powder to 4,616 families in 19 villages of Hingalganj block in North 24-Parganas district. The centre also treated 2,050 patients. **Saradapitha:** 20,000 kg rice, 4,500 saris, 4,568 lungis, and 700 tarpaulins to 5,903 families at 17 villages of Hingalganj and Sandeshkhali I blocks in North 24-Parganas district. Besides, the centre treated 6,288 patients in 33 villages of Gosaba, Hingalganj, Minakhan, and Sandeshkhali blocks in North and South 24-Parganas districts. **Sargachhi:** 82,164 plates of cooked food (rice and dalma), 914 kg chira, 516 kg gur, 13,510 kg rice, 113 kg muri, 1,198 kg biscuits, 2,364 kg baby food, 10,320 l mineral water, 200,000 halogen tablets, 1,000 kg bleaching powder, 7,000 kg lime, 160 candles, 381 Zeoline, 250 bales of used garments, and 3 bags of utensils to 4,373 families in 22 villages of Hingalganj block in North 24-Parganas district. **Sikra**

**Kulingram:** 148,835 plates of cooked food (khichri), 4,783 kg chira, 1,655 kg gur, 5,200 kg rice, 1,950 kg dal, 100 kg soya bean, 30 kg chhatu, 260 kg milk powder, 2,878 kg biscuits, 750 kg muri, 64 kg other snacks, 21 kg nutritious food powder, 9,730 l mineral water, 800,000 halogen tablets, 1,125 kg bleaching powder, 22 l Zeoline, 2,253 candles, 2,120 matchboxes, 992 soap-bars, 100 l disinfectant, 3,785 saris, 2,142 dhotis, 1,150 lungis, 250 vests, 445 assorted garments, 350 bales of used garments, 100 towels, 100 mosquito-nets, and other items to 17,207 families in 65 villages of Sandeshkhali I and II blocks in North 24-Parganas district. The centre treated 6,881 patients as well. **Swamiji's Ancestral House:** 560 kg chira, 70 kg gur, 280 kg rice, 56 kg dal, 70 kg biscuits, 25,000 halogen tablets, and a large number of used garments to 2,800 victims in 7 villages of Sandeshkhali I block in North 24-Parganas district. **Taki:** 24,000 kg chira, 3,618 kg gur, 165 kg biscuits, 50 kg milk powder, and 47,000 halogen tablets to 11,082 families in 27 villages of Hasnabad, Hingalganj, and Sandeshkhali II blocks in North 24-Parganas district.

**Refugee Relief** · During the month of June **Colombo** centre in Sri Lanka continued relief operations among victims of the recent civil war, by distributing 1,000 kg nutritious supplementary food, 1,000 kg biscuits, 450 kg soya nuggets, 300 kg glucose, 2,416 kg milk powder, 2,500 tubes of toothpaste, 2,000 toothbrushes, 5,000 soap-bars, 2,000 towels, and 1,000 pairs of slippers to 1,000 families at Vavuniya-Cheddykulam refugee camp.

**Distress Relief** · The following centres distributed various items to the needy in their respective areas: **Bela-gaum:** 375 kg rice, 375 kg flour, 75 kg dal, and 75 kg edible oil; **Belgharia:** 317 saris, 122 dhotis, 361 pants, 377 shirts, and 456 children's garments. **Hyderabad** centre installed a mineral water plant at Donkada village in East Godavari district, Andhra Pradesh, to provide potable water to the villagers who had been suffering from various ailments due to high salt content in the water there. The production capacity of the plant is 2,000 l of drinking water per hour.

**Economic Rehabilitation** · In Fiji, **Nadi** centre has constructed 2 houses at Korovuto, Nadi, for 2 poor families who have lost almost everything in a recent flood.



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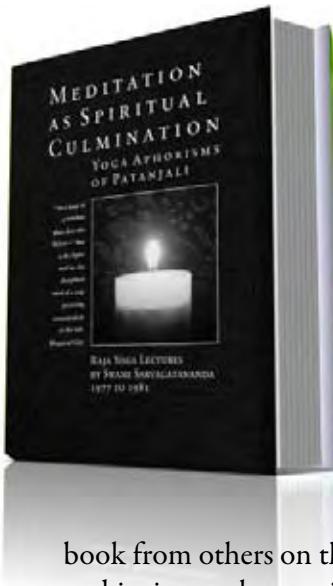


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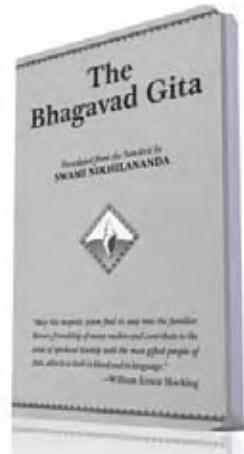
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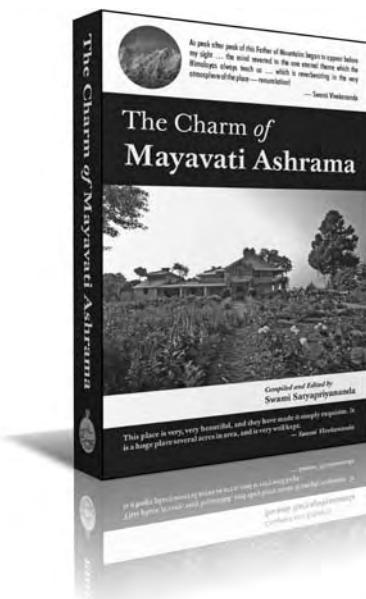
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